

GRAIL

■ THAT GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED IN ALL THINGS ■

Grandmas are Back in Style	1
Our Poorest Christmas	7
Holy Communion in a Slum Church	11
Natural Childbirth	12
The Angels' Song	17
There Was a Mouse Once	19
Long Before Santa Claus	25
One Room World?	29
Abbey Newsmoth	35
Sundays of Advent	38
Triumph at Tyburn	43
Hard Way Home	46
Books	53
Index for 1950	60

The GRAIL



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THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

Without faith in the mystery of Christmas, millions of people today are ignorant of God as a person. They are like the little girl who was scared of the dark and couldn't go to sleep. She called out to her mother to come and stay with her, because she was scared.

"Don't be afraid, honey," said her mother as she sat down on the child's bed. "Remember that God is here with you."

"Yes, mommy, I know," whimpered the girl, "but I want somebody with a face."

Since the beginning of history the cry of men bewildered by the presence of trouble and danger has always been the same as that of the frightened little girl: "Lord show us Thy face."

We find this age-old desire of the human heart expressed beautifully in the Divine Office of Advent in the short responsory for Tierce: "Come to deliver us, O Lord God of might. Show us Thy face and we shall be saved."

And God in His divine mercy has listened to this cry from the depth of the human heart, and has given to men His Son, Jesus Christ, a Face to be seen, a little Body to be held—Christ with an ear to hearken to the plaints of the children of men, with a voice to speak words of Divine Wisdom, and with a heart to understand and to love us—this Jesus Christ Whom we adore with Mary as the Babe of Bethlehem.

—Father Walter, O.S.B.

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G randmas are back in style

By ETHLYN PAIGE GORSLINE

Science has rediscovered what grandma has known all along . . . that babies need to be cuddled and loved and rocked by one who has the patience and understanding that comes from a life time of serving others.

IN NO LESS than six magazines I have read lately, there were articles by writers whose word carries authority in the child rearing field, and one and all they agree that Grandma should be taken out of moth balls and allowed to come in contact with the grandchildren again. Whether or not the high cost of baby sitters has

had anything to do with this bettering of relations with our elderly parents is anybody's guess, but the babies are going to love it.

Grandma's status with the child experts fluctuates like the feminine hemline, rising and falling with the changing times. In the days of my youth they (the Grandmas) were personages to be reck-

oned with. From the first twinges of prenatal "morning sickness" till baby burst into loud protest at entering an unfeeling world, Grandma was Mother's standby. If the family doctor had arrived in time to officiate, it was she who took the squirming newcomer from his hands and wrapped it in bands and the yards of coverings that custom prescribed. If Doctor didn't get there, she went right ahead anyway, and Papa was spared the exorbitant five dollar fee that physicians received for delivering these little bundles.

Then while Mother recuperated, Grandma took over the whole household, feeding and managing the rest of the family with one hand, as she charted a course for the newest with the other. She had remedies for every ill that babies are heir to and for some they were only suspected of having. These ran all the way from pumpkin seed tea through saffron, catnip and pennyroyal taken on the inside, to raisin poultices applied to the navel. When nothing else made baby happy there was always a "sweet sucker" to revert to; bread and sugar tied into a square of clean white cloth and dipped into warm water, then popped into a small mouth to take his mind off his troubles; her version of a pacifier.

Grandma's knowledge of medi-

cal care was partly the result of her long years of experience in raising her own brood and largely from ideas passed on to her from generations of women who had to rely on their resourcefulness in caring for their sick. Small wonder that along with sound medical practises there also gathered superstitions and notions that at their best were harmless though ineffectual, and at the worst were downright dangerous.

One trouble was that they often mistook "happenstance" for scientific fact. For instance "bowel complaint" was a bugaboo that faced babies during the hot summer months, especially if they were teething. Grandma reasoned that teething babies in winter were seldom afflicted so the cause must come from something they did in summer that was different. In winter they were swathed in flannels, in summer these were discarded. "No, no," said Grandma, "keep their little bowels warm," and warm they were, under wool belly bands that scratched and prickled. No one seemed to suspect the unprotected milk supply and the unboiled nursing bottles that baby was beginning to use at teething time, as mother's supply sometimes became insufficient for her little customer.

Grandma KNEW that cherries and milk taken in conjunction

spelled certain death. Didn't her grandmother's Uncle Jonathan eat cherries and drink milk, and didn't he die that very night? Perhaps Uncle Jock had a heart attack, but they couldn't see his heart and the cherries and milk were in evidence.

So when my cousin Sarah admitted climbing the old black cherry tree and eating a pound or so of fruit, then drinking a couple of cups of warm milk when Uncle George milked the cow, Grandma knew just what to do. She tickled the inside of Sarah's reluctant throat with a feather from the wing of the red rooster and sure enough, Sarah became VERY sick immediately.

I watched the proceedings from a distance and failed to report that I too had partaken of the same baleful combination. I felt that any resulting effect would have to be dire indeed to exceed Grandma's cure. No internal explosion took place and to this day I still enjoy a lunch of cherries with a glass of milk, and modern food authorities sanction my choice.

Grandma had taboos about going into the water. She really felt that the Saturday night wash tub by the kitchen range was the proper place for bathing, but if folks MUST go splashing about in lakes and such there were defi-

nite conditions to be observed. Ladies (and you became a lady, Grandma hoped, when your skirts reached shoe top length about your fourteenth year) did not disport themselves in public unless adequately clothed. This meant long black stockings held in place with garter belts or even a pair of second best corsets; black bloomers coming well down below the knees and a full skirted overdress the same length with elbow sleeves.

Of course all bathing must wait till at least two hours after a meal and must never be done while the water was chilled by morning or evening temperatures, which left a rather limited time interval. This held true even for youngsters wading, when the water level was between ankles and knees. "Yes, you may go wading," Grandma would agree, "but not till your dinner is settled and digested."

Grandma not only supervised our physical and spiritual upbringing, she kept an eye on our outer appearance.

"Be sure to stop in and see Grandma on your way to school," Mama would admonish.

"Let's see your ears and your elbows," was Grandma's routine greeting.

She had a way of pulling the ear slightly forward and upward

that must have given as much insight as those clever instruments used by surgeons nowadays.

"Just as I thought," she always said, "Enough dirt to plant a hill of potatoes. Now, your elbows."

No use pulling your sleeves down. When Grandma said elbows, she meant elbows, and she kept a cake of special pumice for stubborn grime.

"What on earth have you done to your hair?" sputtered Grandma, "It's all frizzed out like a cow's tail."

Now I had taken considerable pains to achieve that "frizzed" look at the ends of my two long braids. I had dipped the last eight inches in a light sugar solution the night before while Mama was in the "settin' room," listening to Papa read the news. Then I had braided the strands as tightly as possible. Combed out this morning it had a lovely bushy texture that delighted my heart. But Grandma held it under the pump in the black iron sink, then plaited it into sleek ropes and looped them up close to my head where she tied them with precise bows.

"Now," she said, inspecting her finished product, "you look like a little lady. Behave as well as you look, and I won't be ashamed of you. And here's a couple of fresh doughnuts for your lunch pail."

Those were the Grandmas of fifty years ago. Then subtly the scene began to change. It became fashionable to ridicule anything that was "old fashioned" and Grandma and so much of what she believed in came under that head. Whatever Grandma thought or did was funny and undoubtedly wrong. Grandmas SPOILED the babies that were being brought up so scientifically. They cuddled them when they cried, and they were even known to slyly turn the clock ahead a half hour to speed feeding time for a grandchild that was fussing about his schedule.

What people forgot was, that there are things that the years can not change. Love and faith and the patience and understanding that a lifetime of serving others brings.

Now, almost overnight it seems, Science has taken up arms for Grandma. They have discovered what she has known all along. Babies NEED to be loved and cuddled and rocked. And whose lap is as wide and whose arms as tender as Grandma's?

"Feed baby when he says he's hungry, not when the clock says so," go on the experts, and Grandma smiles her little smile. They have even turned their thumbs down on anti-thumb sucking devices, though they have not as yet

advocated a return to her "sweet sucker."

"As he grows older, let him visit with Grandma and Grandpa," they say, for he still needs that special brand of "spoiling" that Mother and Dad are too overwrought or busy to provide. Grandma envelopes him in the confidence that he longs to feel. SHE knows that he is going to grow into the finest man in the country, all present indications to the contrary. She knows this, because his dad was just the same little scamp at his age and look at him now.

So she scrubs his neck and ears and bakes him pancakes in shapes of turtles and dogs and wiggly squigs. And she tells his stories of lovely places and daring deeds and together they build a dream. And somehow Youth and the Later Years find a meeting ground where the In-Betweens can not come and where the shape of things to come find a foundation in the certainty of what has been.

Next to having a couple of Grandmas and as many Grandpas, the nicest thing in the world is to be one.

THERE WILL BE LIGHT

Though earth be wrapped in a web of night,
There will be light—there will be light;
Tell the watchers it shall come to them
Across the years from Bethlehem.

Vesta Crawford





Meinrad Kinder, O.S.B.

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Money cannot buy happiness at Christmas time . . . not the kind of happiness Pa and Ma surprised us with.

Our Poorest Christmas

by Gladys Loguski

“W E WON’T have much of a Christmas this year,” Ma said. It had something to do with the depression. We didn’t know what Ma meant by the depression except that it made her and Pa act awfully queer, especially now that Christmas was drawing near.

One day I climbed the rickety ladder over the tool shed to Pa’s workshop. Pa could make anything out of wood, and I often watched him work. But he looked surprised when I poked my head through the hole in the floor.

“What are you making?” I asked.

“Oh; just a milking-stool,” Pa answered, but he tried to hide the

shiny piece of wood he held in his hands.

“What’s that for?” I wanted to know.

“Well, it’s—one of the legs,” Pa said. “Here, sandpaper it for me, will you?”

“Why do you want to be so particular about an old milking-stool?” I questioned.

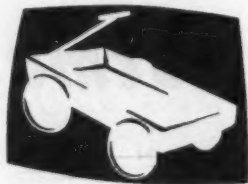
“So we don’t get any slivers in our hands,” Pa snapped, “and quit asking so many questions.”

I didn’t ask any more questions.

Then one afternoon shortly before Christmas, the pipes fell off the stove in school. Miss MacLaughlin bundled us up and sent us home. Florence and I tried all the snow banks on our way, but

Eugene didn't waste time puttering around. He was going up the lane by the time Florence and I started down the last slope. When we got to the kitchen door, he ran out to meet us.

"Come and see what I saw!" he shouted as he grabbed me by the arm and dragged me into the



dining room. "It was the prettiest—" and then he stopped.

"What did you see?" I asked but he just stood there with his mouth open and pointed to a spot on the floor.

"It was there a minute ago," he mumbled. He looked up to ask Ma where it had gone, but Ma let on as if she didn't notice.

"You go fetch me an arm load of wood," she scolded. "The wood box is almost empty. Hurry up now, before the fire goes out." Ma turned him around by his shoulders and practically shoved him out the door. Eugene was so mad he forgot all about what he had seen.

"Pa and I are busy," Ma said and she shooed Florence and me

out on the hill. It didn't take much shooing. We'd be out there day and night if Ma and Pa would only let us, but they always made us ask for permission before.

Eugene caught up to us, and we raced to the bobsleigh. We tried to jump on at once and Florence happened to be the last to get on. The sleigh took off and down we went. Florence screamed and I thought she was falling off, so I tightened my grip on her ankles, but the tighter I gripped the louder she screamed. I couldn't figure out why until we got to the bottom of the hill. Eugene and I started back to try it again, but Florence just sat there. She looked like a fat little old lady.

"What's the matter with you?" I asked, and she began to cry.

"I tried to tell you that I wasn't even on the sleigh!" she said.

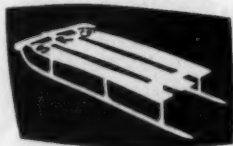
She had gathered snow all the way down the hill, and it was stuffed way up to her neck. She looked so funny that I had to laugh. Eugene laughed too, and pretty soon Florence laughed. We laughed so much that we forgot all about the peculiar way Ma and Pa had acted.

Eugene wanted a sleigh like Pa's for Christmas. One that he could lengthen or shorten and would have two sets of runners with shiny steel shoes and a real

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tongue. Pa said that the only place he could get one like that would be from Sear's Roebuck. Pa said he ordered one, although I never saw a sleigh like that when I looked through the catalogue.

But the sleighs weren't coming. Every time Pa went to town, he said he stopped at the depot, but they were never there. It was the day before Christmas and the sleighs still hadn't come. Eugene was pretty disappointed, and now we began to figure out what Ma meant by the depression.

It was Christmas Eve. Pa hitched the team to the Model A and pulled us to the main road, so we could get to Midnight Mass. He said he'd meet us there when we got back. Pa couldn't get to Mass until eight o'clock next morning because somebody had to stay home with Eleanor. She was only a baby.

The church was warm and cozy and bright. We didn't have electric lights on the farm. The poinsettia plants bloomed like fire and a big silver star hung over the crib.

Before Mass started, the organ played "Silent Night," and the choir sang. Goose pimples stuck out all over me. It was all so beautiful that I almost forgot we weren't getting any presents for Christmas.

Afterwards, Ma took us by the hand, and we went up to see the Blessed Virgin and Christ Child. Ma gave each of us some pennies to drop into the offering box.

When we got back to the half mile corner Pa was there with old Jim and Maud as he had promised. The night was very quiet. Our four buckled boots creaked in the frosty snow as we made our way slowly to the house. The kerosene lamp cast a dim light from the front room. That's probably why we didn't see the Christmas tree at first. It stood in a corner, and the whole place seemed to be cluttered with presents!

No one told me that the little table and chair set were mine, but I knew it nevertheless. They even looked like me. I made a flying leap to where they stood and tried the table with the leaves up and





I tried it with them down. I caressed the perfect little spokes and all the fancy grooves. I felt the white paint and sat in the chairs. They were exactly like Ma's in her kitchen!

I tried to get everybody to look, but Eugene was running his fingers over smooth black letters printed on the tongue of a sleigh. "Sear's Roebuck & Co." it said. I looked at Pa for an explanation, but he only sat there and grinned.

Florence was opening drawers and closing doors on the cutest little shoe cabinet I'd ever seen. Beside it stood three flower stools, stained and varnished.

Our commotion wakened the baby, and Pa picked her up. She was about to cry when she spied the little green wagon. She wriggled out of Pa's arms and toddled straight to it. When the excitement died down a little, if one can say that it did, Pa picked up one of my little chairs and said, "Here's the leg to the milking stool you sand papered for me.

This chair is also that 'prettiest' little thing Eugene wanted to show you the day the stove pipes fell down at school."

Ma and Pa doubled over with laughter.

"We had all these things spread out to paint," Ma explained between breaths, "when I said, 'Wouldn't it be funny if the kids came home from school now?' and when I looked out the window, there you were."

I just finished putting 'Sear's Roebuck & Co.' on Eugene's sleigh," Pa went on, "and sure was afraid I smeared the wet paint."

Ma and Pa made these presents all by themselves!

"We couldn't afford to buy Christmas Presents," Pa apologized, "so your Ma and I decided to make them. It's the best we could do, kids. We hope you like them."

Like them? Like them! We hugged Pa, and we hugged our presents. Pa's eyes got real shiny like the big star over the crib, and Ma busied herself by pulling out home made fudge, gaily colored popcorn balls and butternuts from our woods.

Our poorest Christmas turned out to be the richest Christmas anyone could ever have!

HOLY COMMUNION IN A SLUM CHURCH



Down the tormented tangle of drab lives
The simple white Host falls
Muting the tumult of their thoughts,
Comes with immaculate solace to the depths
Of forlorn, baffled hearts,
As lightly as the flutter of first snow
Upon harsh winter earth
Covering all numbed and twisted things,
The gaunt, grimacing branches and the ground
Peeled by the sleet of all green gracefulness,
With broad composure and a muffled peace.
Deep through drear lives
Bared by relentless chilling poverty
To stolid barrenness,
Cramped to the stone-grey core,
The Giver of all Light and Loveliness
Descends
And is drawn.
Into obscurest mazes of mute woe
And labyrinths of mutilated lives
Christ melts and is dissolved.

by Liam Brophy



Natural

BY

AILEEN HOGAN

Instructor in obstetric
nursing at Western Reserve
University

Photo by Philip Gendreau

THE lives of young families are being lived in troubled times, their childhood saw the depression, their youth the war, and then a truly troubled peace. Now they face the threat and actuality of another war. How they crave some strong foundation for their families. Their search is urgent, unceasing. It follows many paths. Hundreds of these families, over the past two years, have found their way to my office. They be-

live that any real foundation of peace lies in the family, and that the family begins with the birth of a child.

Strangely enough, they do not come asking, "What is Natural Childbirth?" This they know. What they ask is guidance, support as they go towards it. I ask them why they want this Training for Childbirth... what they expect from it. Their answers are all essentially the same. "This is

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Childbirth

Added to the age-old fear of pregnancy is the cold, mechanical method of handling childbirth in our modern hospitals... Natural Childbirth points the way to a more normal and cheerful preparation for bringing human life into the world.

our responsibility... we want to see this through together... we want this to be a shared experience... we want to know each step of the way... we want to take an active part in bringing the baby into the world... it is our joint responsibility to be there, awake, and conscious when the baby arrives, the first to welcome him home... the first to see him... the first to hear him cry... the first to hold him."

What they are really saying is "Show us the way to childbirth without fear. Help us to be unafraid." Fear is at the root of much of our troubles. Basically it is lack of faith in God. Our young people trying to bring up a Christian family in a pagan world are beset by many real and terrifying fears, fears of which they do not need to be ashamed. The Church tells them to rest their whole security in God, and to have no fear. They want so desperately to do this, but they do not know how. The words have only the impact of a slogan to them.

One outstanding fear which haunts too many of our Catholic

homes is the fear of pregnancy. The voice of the Church leaves them little leeway... "Accept children as God sends them... or complete abstinence." So now there is the double fear, fear of pregnancy and fear of sin.

Go into a family with this too common problem. A new baby has arrived. Happiness in the child is the predominant emotion. The mother deliberately closes her mind to the memory of the long lonely labor and the blurred distorted remembrance of the actual birth. She tries to forget the past nine months, with their vague discomforts, anxieties and fears, fears mainly of the unknown. She has a disquieting feeling that she still does not know too much about it.

And we must not forget that it is not only the Mother who fears pregnancy, labor, and birth as a time of great loneliness and fear. The young husband has seen his wife become more and more absorbed in herself, withdrawn, wrapped up in her new and private life, her own plans, her own thoughts, shutting him out com-

pletely. He has no way of knowing that this is nature's way of protecting the new life which the mother carries. The husband does not know how to carry his share of the load. During the hours of labor he sits helpless in the waiting room, weighed down by a very real sense of inadequacy. He is responsible for this baby. He should be by his wife...he feels there must be some part in this for him...he knows his wife needs him...wants him with her...but he sees no way.

Now the baby is here. Thankfulness, happiness and pride balance evenly with responsibility and added work, with sleepless nights and mounting bills. Then, relentlessly, into their minds comes the fear of another and immediate pregnancy. It is not that they do not want many children. A large family is something they do want with all their hearts. But the road is too rough. They turn to the Church for guidance. The answer is inexorable... "Accept children as they come...or complete abstinence."

Bewildered, they try to follow the precepts given them. But the oneness, the unity of the family is missing. Neither is articulate enough to bridge the gap. They do not understand.

If our families are to be patterned on the Holy Family we

must have mothers as joyous as Mary when she cries out to Elizabeth, "Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."; we must have husbands as understanding as Joseph; and in each child we must see again the Christ Child.

Now who wouldn't want just this? But to get right down to basic facts, how can we accomplish this? How can we "make straight the way?"

We have but to use the gifts which God has placed before us. Health is God's most common gift to young parents. We can show them how to make it a glorious living abundant health...not a mere absence of disease. How? By teaching them as children the value of good nutrition, of right living, of preparation for parenthood.

And how do we build a united family in these months before the baby arrives? By having the parents relearn, together how babies develop and are born. This is not a simple thing to learn. But as they sit down with many other parents and learn each step of the way, as each sees his particular place in the pattern, each as important, each as necessary, both together essential, there grows up a God-given sense of security, of confidence in themselves and in each other. As they see the pattern unfold they realize, too, their

joint and individual responsibility for securing supervision and guidance and care. They see that God has not left them helpless, that in many ways, in many guises, 'He has sent His Angel before them.'

And when the baby's birthday arrives, is it to be a time of fear and loneliness and terror? Let us indeed make straight the way. In our Christian families the father is the head, he is the one who leads supports, sustains. On this most important day his role does not change. Now more than ever the mother needs him by her side to sustain, to encourage, to support her through this day of labor.

In our hospitals, in an effort to make childbirth safe, to avoid infection, to safeguard the mother and the baby, we have made birth a mechanized, cold and completely abnormal affair. Let us keep all the safeguards. Let us have the finest of doctors, the closest of supervision, the most modern of hospitals, but let us use them to make the birth of a baby a completely happy and satisfying occasion for the whole family.

We are following the pattern of Natural Childbirth. Together the parents have learned each step of the way which leads to the baby's birth. Together they have mastered and practiced and made their own the exercises which train the mother's muscles and

discipline her will for the one day's hard work.

Now it is most necessary that on this day the parents be together. This is the day the mother most needs to know that her husband is by her side. There is no loneliness when she opens her eyes and sees him sitting there by her bed. If under the stress of labor she forgets her part, there is no one who can help her back to her role better than her husband. If decisions are to be made she rests confident and secure in the knowledge that they can make them together. And as head of the family the husband takes his responsibility gladly. When the baby arrives it is indeed the light from the Crib which shines in eyes as they look from the baby into each others eyes and see there the reflection of love and understanding and mutual appreciation of a job well done...together. This is the pattern of Natural Childbirth.

And do not tell these young fathers that this cannot be done. Remember this is the generation we took from high school. We sent them into a terrible war. We deliberately taught them that there was nothing they could not do. They proved it to themselves during long years of fighting. These men have come back to build a different world. Once they

know this pattern of Natural Childbirth no one is going to tell them it is not available. This Advent command "Make straight the Way" is levelled particularly at our Catholic hospitals. The Sisters are like the Church itself, conservative, thoughtful, deliberate. Once they realize how perfectly this new method is in keeping with the law of nature, and how consistent it is with the attitude of the Church towards the mystery of new life, towards the responsibility of both parents for the unborn child, they will be the first to extend to these expectant parents the full support they need.

In some localities great progress has already been made. Out in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Sister Theophane and her small group of Medical Missionaries, nurses and doctors and teachers, have answered the bishop's call for assistance. The need for good maternity care in that area is most

urgent. Sister Theophane's patients come long distances to the Mission Clinic. They come as families and will not be separated. Sister Theophane and her group have met this challenge. They have built and are building small apartments close to the midwifery school. Here the family comes. Here the family stays, together, during labor and delivery and the necessary rest period after the baby's birth. Here indeed is a Catholic medical group meeting the needs of the family, keeping all the safeguards of modern medicine, yet encouraging the mother and father to build up in themselves that security which comes from being together, and doing God's will with enthusiasm.

For further information consult:
PREPARATION FOR NATURAL CHILDBIRTH

by the Maternity Center Association,

New York 21, N.Y., 1950, 50¢.



**PENNIES
FROM
KEVIN**

—Kevin Ryan is just a little boy—not a slot machine—but his dad hit him for the jack pot.

Kevin, not quite 2 years old, broke his piggy bank. No one was around and he began swallowing pennies.

Hearing him gag, his dad, Carroll Ryan, ran into the boy's bedroom. He slapped him on the back and two pennies came up.

Ryan slapped again and more coppers fell to the floor. He repeated the process. Altogether, Ryan hit the human slot machine for 14 cents.

Kevin was X-rayed. The jackpot was empty.

The Angels' Song

A GRAIL Book Selection from *The Prince of Peace*
by Archbishop Goodier

“AND suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will” (Luke 2, 13-14).

It was fitting that this manifestation of the angels should have been made on this night of the Nativity. The fall of the rebel angels has been explained as the refusal to adore the Incarnate God that was to be; they would not bow down before Him who was to make Himself “less than the angels.” Hence, when the actual manifestation came, at the moment of our Lord’s great humiliation on this earth, those who had been faithful could not but have rejoiced; they break out with their chorus of praise: “Glory to God in the highest!”

Then the consequences to war-worn man are recorded: “... and on earth peace to men of good will.” Man at war with God, man at war with himself, man all restless, is at last to be given peace, if only he will have it. Again St. Paul sees with the angels’ eyes: “He is our bond of peace; He has made the two nations one (Jews and Gentiles), breaking down the wall that was a barrier between us ... so as to make peace; both sides, united in a single body, He would reconcile to God through His cross.... So He came, and His

message was of peace for you who were far off, peace for those who were near; far off or near, united in the same Spirit, we have access through Him to the Father.”

It was not merely the “Pax Romana,” at that moment reigning, that the angels announced; it was the still greater “Peace which the world cannot give,” which those know who possess it.

The Church has taken these words of the angels and has built upon them one of the most beautiful of her hymns. In the first part she dwells on and expands the first words of the angels, endeavoring to give expression to their affections when she sings: “We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee. We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.”

Then the hymn turns to the earthly results of the great mystery, hailing our Lord as the Incarnate Son, the Lamb of God, who brings about peace on earth by means of the redemption in His Blood. “Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy. Thou only art Lord. Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high, together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”



Philip Gendreau

When little heads begin to nod Christmas night and the shiny new toys stand idle in a corner, gather your children around you and read them this delightful story of the mouse who lived in the stable where Christ was born.

BY HARRY and MADELINE VIENS

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There was a mouse once

who lived in a stable behind an inn in a very small town called Bethlehem. Bethlehem was in Judea, a country quite far from here, farther than the farthest you've ever been. This mouse lived a long time ago way back before yesterday, even before you or I can remember.

Mouse had no name. He was called simply Mouse by his friends: Cow and Horse and Mule and Lamb. And because he was so very tiny and so very furry and so very grey and the others were so big, they didn't bother with him very much.

But Mouse loved everyone and didn't seem to notice their neglect. He would go to Cow and say: "Nice weather we're having!"

Cow would chew her cud softly and flick her tail to drive the flies away and then she'd mutter, "Well, it may be nice weather for mice, but it's very chilly for us cows."

So Mouse would nod and smile pleasantly and scamper to see Horse. Horse would say, "Now Mouse, I'm very busy this evening; I have a great deal to think about so please don't bother me with idle talk."

Mouse would blush behind his long whiskers and stammer that it could wait and he'd run to Mule.

Mule worked hard every day and he liked his sleep. He would yawn and blink at Mouse and say,



"Not today Mouse, I'm too tired to talk."

So Mouse would wish him a very polite goodnight and go to Lamb. Lamb liked Mouse because he was so small, and Lamb was afraid of big things. Probably he would have spent more time with Mouse but he was so afraid that the other animals would laugh at him, for, after all, he was not so very big himself. And, he wanted to be like the big animals. So Lamb always pretended to sleep.

Mouse would sigh and sit up and look at them in the half-light of the stable. And then he'd say to himself, "What nice friends I have; only, I wish they had more time to talk to me."

For, Mouse was very lonely.

Cow went to her field in the day to eat and to make milk. Horse took his Master riding. Mule drew his cart to and from the market place all day. And Lamb went up into the hills to grow his wool.

But Mouse only stayed in the stable and never went beyond the door. And though he played all day and scampered up the walls and jumped in the hay, he always liked company. But no one ever visited the stable and so he had only Cow and Horse and Mule and Lamb to talk to. And they were very poor company for him.

Still, Mouse lived his life out, a little lonely, but very happy, and his days in the stable were rich and full because Mouse loved everyone and everything, and for him anything to do was fun.

There came a night, however, when Mouse had his fondest wish. The stable had guests. It was in the winter when the snow lay heavy upon the earth and one had

to bundle up real warm to keep from catching a cold.

Mouse had said goodnight to his friends and was standing by



the door gazing through a large knothole in the wood. He could see above him the cold clear evening sky, speckled with warm nodding stars. Suddenly, he heard people approaching. A man walking and a woman riding on a mule.

They went to the inn and Mouse could hear them talk to the innkeeper who stood in the lighted doorway of the inn stamping his feet to keep warm. The innkeeper's words made tiny puffballs of frosty white steam in the cold night air: "There's no room here but you can spend the night in the stable if you wish..."

The man and woman turned wearily towards the stable.

Mouse, seeing this, jumped with joy. He rushed to Cow, and, dancing a jig on the fencepost before



her, cried: "There's someone coming to spend the night in the stable!"

"Humph!" grunted Cow, "now I suppose I shall have to move over to make room."

Mouse felt that this was not a nice way to receive guests but he decided that Cow must be tired and therefore out of patience. He scampered to Horse and sang out, "We're going to have company! People are coming to visit us in the stable!"

Horse chewed his oats thoughtfully, pawed the floor with a shake of his head, and said, "Well, they can't be important for no one of any importance would spend the night in a stable."

Mouse was hurt to hear Horse say this, because after all it was a very *good* stable. But he was so happy to have company that he didn't say anything.

"We're having guests," he whispered to Mule.

Mule tossed his head sleepily. "Now I shan't get any sleep at all," he complained.

Mouse felt discouraged; no one liked his good news. He went slowly to Lamb and sitting up and crossing his forepaws in a solemn manner, he said, hopefully, "We're having visitors."

"Oh dear!" bleated Lamb, "I hope they aren't big, for big people always frighten me."

The stable door opened now, and the man and woman and the mule entered. Mule made room for the strange mule. Mouse could hear them whispering in the darkness. The strange mule said that they had come a long way and that he was very tired. Mouse listened to them and at the same time watched carefully as the man and woman prepared to sleep in the hay. He didn't want to miss a single thing for heaven knew when he'd have guests again.



However, the whispering of the mules made Mouse very drowsy and after checking to make sure that his visitors were comfortable he climbed up to the eaves to his favorite corner and curled himself to sleep. He took one last peek at the evening sky and smiled sleepily to himself.

There high above the stable was the biggest star Mouse had ever seen. And as he blinked with the

wonder of it, he couldn't be sure, but it seemed to him that the star had winked!

Somehow, tired as he was Mouse just couldn't sleep. All the excitement had made him restless and he tossed and tossed. Suddenly, he woke up. He thought he heard a small voice crying and when he opened his eyes, the stable was full of light!

Mouse got up and tip-toed out along the beam above the hay pile and peeking very quietly, as quietly as only a mouse can peek, he saw not one, not two but three people! The third was a tiny baby boy! And the light came from all around the baby boy.

Mouse got very excited. He jumped up and hopped and skipped to Cow.

"Cow! Cow! Wake up!" he whispered. "Now we have three!"

Cow mumbled in her sleep and opened her big eyes. She stared with sleepiness into the hay pile, and, as she stared, her eyes widened and softened, and suddenly she seemed to change, "My word!" said Cow, "it's a baby. Mouse, run and see if he needs some milk."

Now, this made Mouse feel very important. Suddenly one of his friends was asking *him* to do something for them and depending on him. He ran and inspected the little boy gravely. He reported to Cow in a whisper, "He's



sleeping now. I don't think he's hungry right at this moment."

By that time, Horse was awake. "Mouse!" he said gruffly, "does that little stranger need anything? He's very important as any one can see by all the light he has brought with him, and he should be made comfortable."

"He's asleep," said Mouse, proud that Horse had asked *him* a question, and that he could answer. Horse suddenly looked up on him as an authority.

Mule also had stirred and was smiling softly at the baby. "Mouse," he said, yawning, "you can run along to bed if you wish. I'll stay awake and watch over him in case he should want something."

"And, Mouse," said Lamb, humbly, "if he needs any wool, I shall be glad to oblige for he's very small."

Now with all these attentions, you couldn't have pleased Mouse more if you had given him a

piece of chocolate cheese! He perched right up on the rail in front of his friends and just glowed in the warmth of their sudden confidence in him.

What a wonderful baby, thought Mouse. Why he even changed gruff old Horse and sleepy Mule. He must be the most wonderful baby ever born. I wonder who He is and what He'll do when He grows up. He must be important. I'm glad He came to our stable.

And so, when the excitement

was over and the animals were drifting off to sleep once more, Mouse ran and got a tiny piece of cheese which he liked to nibble on in the mornings for breakfast. And carrying it right up close to the baby's cheek, he left it there in case he should hunger by morning. And as he turned to go, Mouse received the greatest blessing given to anyone that night. The Christ-child stirred in His sleep and sighed, and Mouse, alone, felt the breath of God.

The morning after





Meinrad Kinder, O.S.B.

Winter Wonderland

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Long Before Santa Claus

BY GILBERT S. OHLMANN

Here are the real facts about the fascinating history of the fat little man in the red suit who is popularly known as Santa Claus.

"The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there."

SOON innumerable children will be reciting or singing the familiar lines of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" with visions of a jolly old gentleman, reindeer, chimneys and fireplaces, and presents galore crowding into their teeming imaginations. In some homes, where German tradition has not died out, Saint Nicholas will not have to wait until the night before Christmas; instead, he will find that the children have prepared for his annual visit on the eve of his feast day, December 6. But in this age of long trousers and anklet socks when reasonable facsimiles of stockings must be substituted on the mantel or bedpost, how much of these excited

youngsters anticipate the miraculous generosity of an Oriental bishop? Or, for that matter, how many of their parents successfully differentiate between Saint Nicholas, Kriss Krinkle, Father Christmas, and Santa Claus? And how many people know that here again, in yet another way, we are indebted to the Benedictine monks for the preservation and dissemination of a beloved legend and custom?

In the liturgical calendar of the Church, December 6 is the feast of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, who lived in the fourth century and gained great esteem for his benevolence, especially for his paternal care

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for the young and the indigent. He became famed for a succession of supernatural deeds, and these in turn gave rise to numerous legends during the Middle Ages. In song and poetry and folklore his name and his deeds were spread through the East, and history records that Italian merchants traveling in Asia Minor plundered his tomb in 1087 and carried his body to Bari, in southern Italy, thus intensifying his fame in western Europe. Especially in France and Germany was the cult of Saint Nicholas widespread and strong.

In the tenth century and afterwards wandering scholars journeyed from monastery to monastery seeking instruction from the learned monks or the privilege of reading precious manuscripts. These young men adopted Saint Nicholas as their patron because of his known kindness to youth, and with them they carried stories of the marvelous and miraculous favors granted through the intercession of their patron. Frequently they repaid the generosity of the monks by leaving behind a manuscript containing a legendary account of the saint's life; this *vita* then became part of the library of the monastery and, upon occasion, served as inspiration for the creative literary efforts of the monks. Thus we find details from these accounts in pious reading material and in the liturgy itself—an unecclesiastical addition in the form of hymns, sequences, or proses.

The most interesting use of this material is in the early miracle

plays, liturgical dramas added as festive embellishments to the offices of vespers, matins, or lauds—and less frequently to other parts of the divine service. Among the surviving examples of this early Benedictine monastic drama, the Saint Nicholas plays have a primary importance. Eight of these plays still exist in mediaeval manuscripts and form the most complete unit of liturgical dramatizations of the miracles of a particular saint. Of the four manuscripts in which these plays are preserved, two are from France and two are from Germany. (The Fleury MS. is the most important in that it contains copies of four separate plays; its companion French MS. is that of the wandering scholar Hilarius, and the single Saint Nicholas play it contains is associated with the monastery at Angers. The Hildesheim MS. is second in importance because it contains two Saint Nicholas plays.) The manuscript, which is probably the oldest and which contains only a fragment of a Saint Nicholas play, has special interest for the friends of Saint Meinrad's Abbey because it belongs to Einsiedeln, the monastery from which Saint Meinrad's was founded. The monasteries in which these plays were presented and which preserved them are Benedictine, (and to the Benedictine monks must go the credit for the transmission of the rich culture of the Middle Ages and for creating much of it.)

But what are these plays about? What aspects of the life of Saint Nicholas do they reveal? And what

is the connection between this bishop and children's stockings?

The themes of the eight extant Saint Nicholas plays revolve about four legends connected with the good Bishop of Myra. One play, the *Filius Getronis*, relates the beautiful story of Saint Nicholas' compassion for the elderly parents of a lad named Adeodatus, (the name is significant—*Given-by-God*) who was abducted on his seventh birthday, December 6, by pagan marauders. One year later to the day, in answer to the prayers of the boy's grief-stricken parents, the great saint snatches the boy bodily from the side of the pagan king, whose cup-bearer he has become, and "wafts" him wine cup and all to his mother's arms. Two of the plays present the story of the saint's concern that no dishonor come to his fame or to his image; these plays are entitled *Iconia Sancti Nicolai*. They tell of a certain rich pagan who has come into possession of an ikon of Saint Nicholas which, he understands, has "magical powers." Embarking upon a journey, the pagan sets up the ikon in his warehouse to guard his treasure. Thieves make off with his goods, leaving the ikon behind. The pagan returns, flies into a passion, desecrates the image and curses the wonder worker. Saint Nicholas, pained by this indignity, appears to the thieves and orders them to return the loot; the pagan, overjoyed, now humbly gives thanks to the ikon, but Saint Nicholas tells him to thank the Christian God, and so the pagan is converted. Two plays,

the *Tres Filiae*, present the best clew to the later Santa Claus concept. This story tells of the three dowerless daughters of a poverty-stricken old man who is unable to find husbands for the otherwise marriageable girls. The eldest daughter resolves to leave her father's protection and give herself up to a life of prostitution, her sisters reluctantly agreeing to this desperate decision. But a neighbor tells the saintly youth Nicholas, who has just come into his inheritance, of the pitiable plight of the three daughters, and so he goes to the rescue. On three successive nights he tosses a bag of gold into the girls' bed chamber, and suitable suitors are procured. The three bags of gold appear in mediaeval art as three golden balls and may even be seen today above the pawnbroker's doorway.

(So far we have accounted for three of the four dramatic legends of Saint Nicholas and five of the eight extant miracle plays associated with the name of this saint. We might point out that these stories appear in other forms of mediaeval literature.) But there remains one more legend which is the basis for the remaining three Saint Nicholas plays, including the *Einsiedeln* fragment, and which seems to have originated in these monastic plays. This is the *Tres Clerici*; it seems to be the special contribution of the clerks, or wandering scholars, who had adopted Saint Nicholas as their own patron. It has all the thrilling excitement of youthful fancy, in-

cluding pathos, violence, suspense, humor, and the inevitable happy ending. Three students ask for a night's lodging at an inn presided over by a sinister couple; they are taken in and shown to their room. The host tells his wife that the boys could easily be murdered for their money and their bodies disposed of without detection. She is persuaded and the crime is committed. Immediately another guest arrives at the inn; this time it is an old pilgrim. He asks for food and is told that the larder contains no fresh meat; whereupon he reminds mine host and hostess that they have just produced a quantity of fresh meat. The culprits recognize that they have been detected by Saint Nicholas and forthwith plead for forgiveness. Saint Nicholas resuscitates the young scholars and all join in praising God.

This original story proved very popular and immediately found its way into all forms of mediaeval art, giving rise to several startling variations. Because of confusion of the story of the scholars with a similar one of the rescue of three officers from a prison tower, Saint Nicholas was frequently depicted with the three youths peeking out of a "tower"; but the "tower" was confused with a barrel, giving rise to a legend which had the innkeepers

not only murdering the three students but dismembering them as well and salting them away in a pickling tub, ready to be served as meat patties to subsequent guests—including Saint Nicholas! The "tower" also became a boat, and Saint Nicholas obligingly became the patron of sailors.

It is regrettable that the Einsiedeln *Tres Clerici* exists only as a fragment, for that portion—the appearance of Saint Nicholas as a pilgrim at the inn—shows a dramatic development that suggests masterful perfection. Characterization and dialogue are excellent; the haggling hostess literally tries the patience of a saint! But her repentance is quite moving and the closing line of the play, *Lausque Deo detur*, leads gracefully into the *Te Deum*, suggesting that the monks of Einsiedeln celebrated the feast of Saint Nicholas by associating this little play with the service of matins on December 6.

If you are not among those for whom the season of love and charity begins early in December, then, on the night before Christmas, when the wine cup is passed and the glittering balls gleam on the tree—or when someone suggests pickled knuckles!—turn your mind's eye to the image of Saint Nicholas who came long before Santa Claus.

Overheard as Mary Sue, 2½, and Johnny, 4½, gazed at the Baby Jesus in the Christmas Crib:

Mary Sue, with a sigh, "Isn't God *cute* sometimes?"

Johnny, severely, "Mary Sue! God's *cute* *all* the time!"

Contributed by Sally Leighton

ONE ROOM WORLD?

BY MARTIN M. McLAUGHLIN



Even our worst enemies could not find a more lethal weapon to destroy us than the bad housing which is strangling the family today.

CHICAGO needs about one hundred thousand new housing units. After a City Council battle lasting over half a year it is getting an increase of about one hundred, to accommodate its predominantly war-born family growth. This watered-down "compromise" is the city's total public-housing program for the next few years—an inadequate supplement to a relatively small private-housing expansion which has been going on for the last three or four years.

This city is only one example—doubtless one of the worst. And public housing itself is only one aspect of the terribly urgent problem of a physical home for the family, which the American Hierarchy considered sufficiently important to mention three times in their statement of November 21, 1949, on "The Christian Family." It is a new problem in the sense that only the last few years have demonstrated the inability (or unwillingness) of private builders to supply enough and the right kind of housing for our people.

As a matter of record, except for the housing of some war-workers during World War I, the Federal government's concern for assistance to families in this field dates back

only to the early New Deal period. The National Housing Act of 1934, which established the Federal Housing Administration to insure mortgages, was followed by the National Housing Act of 1937, which established the United States Housing Authority (now United States Public Housing Authority) to make long-term loans to state or local authorities for construction of low-rent housing. Public housing is still administered on this principle at a ratio of 80-20.

The Second World War brought a further concentration of people in urban and suburban areas before very much had been accomplished through these federal agencies. Now, the post-war housing problem presents two aspects: replacement of substandard housing, and provision of additional new units.

Related to these pressing concerns is the matter of rent control, which began as a remedy for rent raises in defense-plant areas, but was extended in 1942 to all real property in the United States. With modifications, this feature has remained till the present time, although the current statute calls for its termination December 31, 1950, unless local option or the requirements of the new war effort rule otherwise. The Office of the Housing Expediter administers this law.

All this adds up to a rather substantial amount of government control and has prompted widespread criticism among landlords, home owners, and real estate interests. Organized opposition to the opera-

tion of these regulations has prevented anything like an adequate remedy. Housing is still tight.

Explanations are perhaps helpful; but this is a human problem, better understood in the light of the persons most directly affected:

In this connection the experience of one young, middle-income couple may be of interest. It is by no means either unique or untypical:

They started off their married life a couple of years ago with a very small reserve—certainly not enough for a down payment on anything habitable; so they were in the rental market. They followed the usual procedure of letting everyone know about their project and then began to contact the real-estate men and answer the want ads—without effect. Accidentally, though, through a friend, they heard of an apartment and wasted no time taking it—at a modest price (comparatively speaking), \$57.50 per month. It turned out to be a very small, three-room basement in thoroughly disreputable condition; but it was a place to live—many times better than any number of so-called "flats" accommodating families with three or four children. With a certain amount of ingenuity they fixed it up rather attractively; but there was one insoluble problem—the periodic floods which poured over the floors whenever it rained. The bailing-out process came to be a wryly humorous routine; but the ensuing dampness made it imperative to find another place—particularly since the young wife was now pregnant.

After a brief and disillusioning sojourn in a "better" neighborhood the couple began to answer want ads again, with a new urgency; and the unbelievable happened—someone answered the telephone at the number listed. They took the basement apartment advertised, which was much larger and not damp at all; it takes care of the three of them adequately, and there is even some expansion room.

Not everyone has been so lucky. One young university instructor, in the middle-income class, had to suspend his course preparations for three months, while he pounded the pavements in search of an apartment; he found three rooms—now too small for his growing family.

A young \$250-per-month wage-earner, with a wife and baby, has found a two-room apartment, for which he pays \$85 monthly rent.

Another couple, despairing in the city, rented a flat in a suburb for \$65 per month; monthly transportation costs added fifty percent to this figure.

A young taxi-driver had to house his expectant wife, their small son, and himself in a one-room kitchenette for several months.

A parish priest was trying to help a parishioner with three children to find an apartment better than his kitchenette, so that he would not have to break up his family.

Each morning's paper carries some new account of miserable housing conditions. The Catholic labor newspaper WORK published in its June issue some excerpts from

letters written to Chicago housing officials, the Mayor, and the President. Here are some samples:

"We are desperate for a flat. The basement we are living in is not livable for human beings. The floors are so rotten in some places that if we step heavy our feet go right through the floors. We stuff the windows with rags and paper, but it's so damp our clothes are always wet. We lost our 9-year-old boy through tubercular meningitis, and I fear for my other four children. The Health Department says we should move, but where?"

And another:

"Please help me get a place to live. I have three children and expecting another one. We live in one room just large enough for a double bed and a single one. My salary is \$40 a week and I pay \$11.50 a week rent for this one small room."

There is no point in multiplying examples. Conditions, for instance, are especially heart-rending for Chicago's fastgrowing colored population. The dingy kitchenette, generally "accommodating" from six to twelve persons, has, according to one reliable observer (Richard Wright), become the symbol of the social and economic depression of the Negro.

People living under such circumstances are not even in a position to look for housing; they have no time. Public housing seems their only answer.

You are a fortunate house- or apartment-hunter if you have time

to look. If you are now looking for some kind of place to live, perhaps the experiences of some others of us may be of some help—at least toward feeling that you are not alone in your plight.

Tell everyone you know. If you know someone influential—like a landlord, or a janitor—you're lucky.

Answer the want ads. If you are lucky enough to actually contact the rental agent, you may discover (a) that the rent is exorbitant, (b) that you must pay an outrageous price for third-rate furniture, (c) that you have to stand the cost of "re-decoration," (d) that only adults (or even "working couples") need apply, etc.

Put your own advertisement in the paper—and compete with dozens of other printed pleas offering money, new automobiles at list price, fur coats, etc., in return for an apartment.

Perhaps you are thinking of buying a place. If you are a veteran (non-veterans have much more trouble), you have several choices: Within the city, however, it is almost impossible to find a new house; old houses carry a large down payment—sometimes as much as a third of the total cost—and although an FHA mortgage is generally obtainable, it is very difficult to get a GI loan on such a building. (New credit restrictions make the process even more difficult.) Cooperatives offer another possibility; generally they are four- or five-room apartments with (obviously) no expansion room in case your family grows.

You are free, of course, to sell your equity, subject to the agreement of the other members; but the number of such equities advertised for sale every day may suggest caution.

In the suburbs you can buy a new house for a down payment of \$500 or less and monthly installments varying with the size of the down payment and the term of the mortgage. A four room, somewhat expandable house will cost in the neighborhood of \$12,000; but you should double that figure in estimating the total cost. (One should point out, however, that in the face of a depreciating currency, an investment in real property is a sound one.) The suburb, in addition, presents some special problems if you work in the city; transportation, to mention only one, is difficult, long, and expensive.

In the course of the unending search for a place to live, you pick up a good deal of miscellaneous information about the rental business: The real estate agent tells you that the landlord must get \$40 per room per month to break even. The redecorated apartment building with the new elevator enables the owner to charge \$240 per month for a four-room furnished apartment. A brand-new building is under construction behind a sign advertising 2½-room unfurnished apartments at \$87.50 a month, four-room apartments for \$125... And so forth.

The total situation which is a composite of these and many other examples and factors presents a real test. It is a test for the government

under a constitution which gives it authority to provide for the general welfare. It is a test for a party which was elevated to power on a platform promising remedial action in this field. It is a test for the private interests—the Landlords' Associations and Real Estate Boards—whose selfishness and devotion to horse-and-buggy economic ideas made this government action necessary, and whose obstructionism renders the government's program ineffective. It is a test for the faith of Catholics who profess a regard for the Divine institution of the family and yet contribute to the social conditions which threaten its very existence.

Encyclical after encyclical has emphasized the agonizing necessity of preserving the family as the fundamental social unit of a healthy society. Pronouncement after pronouncement has urged voluntary groups to promote social reforms, so that the state will not be forced by its conception of duty to intervene. Little progress has been made—particularly in the field of providing security for the family. The American bishops' statement of last

year describes the social legislation of this country in the matter of housing as "slow, fumbling, and inadequate." Our failure has made that legislation necessary. Our failure, several times compounded, has made it what the hierarchy describes.

Much of our energy has been directed against the real and terrible evil of birth control. However doctrinally sound it may be, it is not convincing to argue that a young couple should bring children into a one-room world. It is not always selfishness or dislike of children that prompts the prevention of birth; very often it is a misguided love. It is hard to condemn a person you love to a childhood of dampness, poverty, squalor, filth, and disease. Our concern for the family should extend beyond simply the promotion of births and Catholic schools. If society is suffering from a breakdown of the family—as we are repeatedly warned—then it seems that the physical surroundings might be a major contributing factor.

Perhaps we should seriously examine our consciences on this housing matter.

"Homes in which people live with a sense of humanity, respectability, and dignity are a thousand times more important for large numbers of poor families than the improvement of a highway on which persons can travel more comfortably. Our government whether it be municipal, state or national, cannot evade its responsibility of clearing slums, of encouraging housing projects, and of helping to provide fit house for the poor."

John T. McNicholas

Late Archbishop of Cincinnati.





Odilo Burkhardt, O.S.B.

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Abbey Newsmonth

Oct. 2nd **SOS** from our newly founded Blue Cloud Abbey...more men needed to assist on construction program. Help was forthcoming....**Brother Alexis** and **Brother Candidate Siegfried** departed with the stone truck for the South Dakota plains. **Brother Meinrad** drove the truck...an adventure not unknown to him since he has driven to the same destination several times during the past summer. The new monastery in South Dakota will be constructed of the same kind of sand stone that St. Meinrad buildings are made of. It may also be of interest to note that Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Illinois—is using the same building material.

11th-12th The famous alumni song "We are the Sons of St. Meinrad" resounded in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Occasion: **Annual Alumni** meeting of all the diocesan priests who attended classes here at the Seminary. Representing the Abbey and Seminary were: **Fathers Anselm, Herman, Lucien, and Ralph**. During the past several years the Alumni meetings have taken place in one or the other near-by diocese. The next meeting, however, will again be held here at the Alma Mater: April 24-25, 1951. The officers elected for the coming year are: **Rt. Rev. Msgr. Pierre Brisse** — President; **Rev. Amos McLaughlin** — Vice Pres.; **Rev.**

Norbert Voll — Secretary; and **Rev. Robert Whelan**—Treas.

19th The parish of St. Anthony, Indiana, lost its Pastor, **Father Aloysius Fischer, O.S.B.** Father returned to the Abbey after spending many fruitful years in Christ's vineyard. There's one thing for which he will always be remembered by the people of St. Anthony...strawberries. Yes, **Father Aloysius** made the little city of St. Anthony famous for its berries: by discovering that the ground in that section of the country proved very favorable for raising strawberries, by discovering this fact at a time when the people on the surrounding farms were most in need, by forming a strawberry Co-op "for" and "by" the people, the title, "King of Strawberries," was earned by **Father Fischer**. Released now at the age of 72 from his parochial duties, Father is stationed at present here at the Abbey. No new appointment has been made to St. Anthony Parish.

26th **Aluminum Cross**...height 13 feet...weight 450 lbs...was erected on top of St. Bede's Hall, our new building under construction. It took some skill and not a few men to balance the cross as well as themselves on the steep roof as the cross was put into place. Attached to the foot of the cross is a large aluminum ball around which is twisted a serpent. Signifi-



Herbert Jogerst at work on a statue of St. Bede for the new building.

cance: Victory of Christ over the world and sin. With the erection of the cross, St. Bede's Hall takes on the semblance of a finished building... and so it is... exteriorly, that is... since interiorly not quite half of the work is completed. Much progress inside should take place during the winter months... the "loaned" Brothers now at Blue Cloud Abbey will be returning and will be assigned work on this building. By next September all the interior should be completed with the exception of the large auditorium.

27th

About ten miles from here... Tell City, Indiana... Family Rosary Crusade Rally was held. Several speakers on the program: Archbishop Paul C. Schulte, Mayor Volmer Franz of Tell City, Mayor William Vogel of Cannelton, and Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. Father Peyton is responsible for furthering the cause of the Family Rosary. He hopes

that eventually 10 million Catholic families in these United States will be reciting the rosary together daily. The Tell City Rally was originally planned to be held here at the Abbey, but was transferred because of outdoor lighting facilities necessary for the evening program. A large number of the seminarians, in fact, most of our 500 students attended the rally... taken to and from Tell City in School Busses. Sincere reverence and deep faith seemed to hover over the assembled throng. The rally was very impressive.

Scholarships For The Priesthood

For many years The Grail magazine has been building up scholarships for the education of poor and deserving boys for the priesthood. Catholic families who cannot have sons of their own to enter the priesthood, can by their offerings help young men to become priests. In September a family that has no boys and who wished to educate a young seminarian, completed The Mother of God Scholarship. There are three more scholarships to be completed. St. Joseph Scholarship needs \$6,110.75; St. Benedict Scholarship needs \$5,908.25; and St. Anthony of Padua Scholarship needs \$5,866.25. No matter how small the offerings, they will be gratefully accepted and added to these scholarships for students for the Holy Priesthood. Offerings may be sent to The Grail Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

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The Servant of God, Brother Meinrad

In the ancient abbey of Maria Einsiedeln in Switzerland there died in 1925 a Benedictine monk, Brother Meinrad Eugster, highly respected by his confreres for his virtuous life. His cause for beatification has been introduced at Rome, and *The Grail* has been chosen for bringing his cause to the knowledge of American Catholics. The publication of favors obtained through the intercession of Brother Meinrad will serve to advance the cause of the saintly lay-brother. Accordingly our readers who experience the help of Brother Meinrad's intercession are asked to notify us of the facts by writing to *The Grail Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana*. The Grail will select outstanding favors for publication. A picture of Brother Meinrad and a prayer for his canonization may be obtained by sending a stamped and self-addressed envelope to *The Grail Office*.

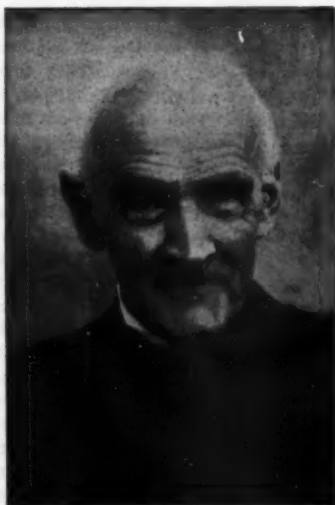
My brother was in trouble—lost his job and was sick. Things looked bad for him. I prayed to Brother Meinrad, promised a Mass for his glorification and publication of the favor in *THE GRAIL*. Thanks to Brother Meinrad my brother is working again and is well. Mrs. S.K., Ind.

Enclosed is an offering in thanksgiving for favors received. Last fall I became quite ill with a stomach and heart trouble and was not able to work. We started a Novena to

Brother Meinrad that my health would improve. It did and I began another Novena asking for employment. The third day of this Novena a man came to our house and offered me a job. E.D., Ind.

We made a Novena and prayed to Brother Meinrad that our eldest son-in-law who has two small children would get a certain position which seemed almost impossible but he did succeed in getting it. Mrs. F.S., Ind.

I promised publication if through prayers to Brother Meinrad an operation would be successful. The remarkable part of it was the speedy recovery as the person undergoing the operation was near seventy and had a bad heart condition. F.H., Ill.



SUNDAYS OF ADVENT

BY CONRAD LOUIS, O.S.B.

Presenting the first in a series of articles applying the Gospels of the Sunday Masses to everyday living. We hope these commentaries will prove helpful to those, particularly family groups, who are preparing the Mass together in anticipation of the Sunday Solemnity.

MISSAL and Bible at hand, we begin the preview of the Sunday Masses of Advent. They form a liturgical wreath for the Feast of Christmas. The purpose of these Masses is aptly expressed in the Post-communion prayer of the First Sunday: "that we may prepare with due reverence for the coming festival of our redemption."

We are prepared for the coming of the Savior this year by four gospel pictures. At first He is far off, coming on the clouds; next He is heard of as in our neighborhood; then He is in our midst, but unrecognized; and finally He is pointed out as Jesus.

The Advent Gospels do not try to teach us immediately the practical Christlike virtues. They rather show

the importance of the whole life of Christ about to begin anew at Christmastide for and in us. Advent tries to impress us with the great opportunity Christmas brings. Christ can really be born again for us this Christmas. The Post-communion prayer of the Vigil of Christmas, the last prayer before Midnight Mass, summarizes the practical aspect of Advent preparation for this coming by praying that attendance at the Advent Masses and receiving Holy Communion may so dispose us "that the celebration of the birth of Christ may refresh us with new draughts of Christ-life. The more generously we open our hearts to Christ, the more abundantly will He fill them with His own perfection. We can be sure the

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blessings of our more perfect life will be felt in the home, family, and world in which we live, and we shall fulfill the Church's great hope for us: that we cooperate with God in Christ for the peace, happiness, and salvation of all men. Thus we can have a share in the giving of the best and greatest Christmas gift: "Peace on earth to men of good will."

He Comes Upon a Cloud

The First Sunday of Advent can be considered as teaching us the importance and urgency of "putting on Christ" *now*. On the great reckoning day we are to be judged by Christ regarding our faithfulness to His teaching. If we take Him as our model, we will not have to fear Him as our judge! St. Paul tells us we had better wake up and put on Christ, because judgment day is coming closer (Epistle). This Christmas it is "closer than when we believed" (were baptized), closer than it was last year at this time. This year we must "put on Christ" more effectively.

A beginning is to be made by getting rid of those things which prevent a fuller coming of Christ to us: worldly excesses of all kinds, quarreling, jealousy, selfishness (Epistle). Here is where the penitential aspect of Advent comes to the fore. We must make room for Christ. If we are to be saved, we are to be saved because we are Christlike. Yes, the Gospel says, they will see the Son of Man (the Child of Bethlehem, Wonderworker

and Healer of Capharnaum, Victim of Calvary) coming upon a cloud to judge the whole world. Redemption and the Kingdom of God are at hand then. We can't get away from it. Our Lord says: "Amen I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all things have been accomplished. Heaven and earth may pass away, *but my words will not pass away.*" So today we need to grasp more clearly this one point at least: the final importance of "putting on Christ." When we receive the Eucharist in today's Mass, we take this lesson and the love and kindness of Our Lord into our poor clay (earth), and then it will yield its fruit of love and consideration for our home, family, and friends and blessed immortality for our own souls (Communion).

Art Thou He?

On the Second Sunday the Savior is no longer far off at judgment day; He is on earth with men. But like the men of the Old Testament we must recognize Him by His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies regarding His teaching and virtues. How did John recognize Him? The blind see, the lame walk, the sick are healed, the deaf hear, the poor hear the "good news"! This is Christ's work, and to be Christlike is to do these things. We help the blind to see and the deaf to hear when we teach little children, the uninstructed, the godless to read or listen about God and Christ. There are many today who can't see God and religion, many who can't see

why God does this or that. They are blind. The sick we have always with us to be nursed, consoled, healed, encouraged, taught the apostolate of suffering for and with Christ. There are so many little ways we can prepare for the coming of Christ so that at Christmas we shall be found worthy to serve and imitate Him with a purified mind (Collect). Imitation of Him is the hope of the world (Epistle), and we should rejoice at our opportunity for it (Alleluia). We will make room for His life in us (Offertory) if we learn in Advent to spurn the secular and worldly things and love those which are heavenly (Post-communion).

One Whom You Do Not Know

The joyous anticipation of renewed growth in Christ is the theme of the Third Sunday of Advent. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.... The Lord is near (Introit, Epistle)!" The Gospel tells us how near: "In the midst of you there has stood One whom you do not know." How often has this been true of us in the past at Mass! What a difference He would have made in our lives and in the lives of those we have contacted, if we had been more aware of Him. Selfishness beclouded our minds. We pray that His visitation will bring light to the darkness of our minds (Collect). The Church is so eager for Him to come (Gradual, Alleluia). She encourages us to hope in Him: "Take courage, and fear not: behold Our God will come

and save us." St. Paul reminds us of one virtue that will attract Him. He calls it moderation. He speaks of a kindly, humble getting along with others, even to the extent of foregoing one's rights of age, position, dignity, and rank for charity's sake. Our Lord's own humble moderation in the place and circumstances of His birth is the best model. If He is to be born in us, He will look for a humble birthplace. Pride, selfishness, and all sin must go. That is why we pray that through the operation of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist we may have the greatest aids to the atonement of our sins as a final preparation of the crib we hope our hearts will be (Post-communion).

His Name: Jesus

The Gospel of this Sunday's Mass points out the coming Savior as Jesus. When Christmas comes on Monday, as it does this year, the Fourth Sunday Mass gives place to the Vigil Mass with its warm expectancy of Midnight Mass: "Today you shall know that the Lord will come and save us (Introit)! Our time of preparation is about to end. All Advent has tried to impress us with the importance of taking the lessons of Jesus as norms for our living so that we will be saved under the norms of His judging. This is summarized in the Collect. As we spend the last moment with Joseph and Mary (Gospel), we cannot help reflecting on the dispositions they had for receiving Christ so fully the first Christmas. We are praying

for those same dispositions today.

As we look back through Advent we see how "the expected One" came ever closer until today's Gospel designates Him as Jesus, Who will save His people from their sins. By our contact with Him, receiving His lessons and His grace, we hope to be saved (Offertory). We know that our eternal salvation depends on how effectively we are nourished by the mystery of His new life renewed in each Holy Mass (Post-communion).

He is Here:

Come Let Us Adore Him!

The Christmas Masses tell us of the threefold Coming of Christ. In each He comes to be the Light of our lives and to lead us to perfection and to God. At midnight—the star, a Child; at dawn—the light, a Guide and Savior; at noon—the brilliant sun, the glorious and triumphant Christ, the King of Ages!

At Midnight Mass we hear the Gospel of His birth in Bethlehem, and we pray that, catching His Light on earth (Collect) and walking by it (Post-communion), we may have a pledge of enjoying it in heaven (Collect, Secret, Post-communion). The Mass at Dawn finds us with the shepherds as new apostles of His coming.

So we pray that the new birth may show forth in our actions and enable us to change our old selves into "other Christs" (Post-communion).

Then, after being with Mary and Joseph at the first Mass and with the shepherds at the second, we find

ourselves at the Third Mass with the whole world (Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory, Communion) worshipping Christ the King, God made man (Gospel). We pray that He, Who was born man so that we could participate in the life of God, may give us a share in the divine life (Post-communion). He will do this if we let His new birth in us free us from the old slavery of selfish, worldly godlessness (Collect) and stir up in us some of that marvelous love which He begins to show forth today.

No Greater Love

The Christmas Gospels show us just the beginnings of His love, for He was born to show us the greatest love of all in His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Did He come as a Child that He might win our love and thus draw us to Himself along the hard way to Calvary?

The lesson of the greatest love is the principal lesson of every Mass—even at Christmas time, for the Gospel of the Sunday within the Octave poignantly recalls Simeon's prophecy of the Passion made over the Infant Savior.

As the Sundays go on revealing the life of Christ we shall see how those who wish to reign with Him must also suffer with Him, and how those who wish to be closest to Him and most like Him may often feel a sword of sorrow pierce their hearts and souls. This is the test of our faithfulness in following Him.

But the Sundays of Advent and Christmas simply help us to meet Christ, and to know and love Him.



To you, peerless Lady, my song . . .
Out from you Joy will shine like the light of clear day.
In your heart the world's curse will be taken away.
Banished Adam hears hope in the tone of your voice.
His disconsolate Eve lifts her eyes to rejoice.
Your high splendor will weary man's upstraining mind.
Over depths of your light eyes of angel are blind.
In your heart, precious throne, sits the King of all kings.
Him you carry, the Strong One who carries all things.
Star of dawn, your white gleaming fast points to the Sun.
Virgin womb, your chaste walls house the all-holy One.
In your heart the Creator has shaped a new earth,
And himself, unborn Child, waits the day of his birth.
To you be all joy, virgin Bride!

From the Acathist Hymn

GREAT CHRISTIANS I

TRIUMPH AT TYBURN

The Church has never been without martyrs. The tyranny of Godless rulers has done much to increase the population of heaven.

IN the early morning of the First Sunday of Advent in the year 1610, an unusual sight could have been seen in the city of London had it not been that the men who enacted this timeless drama were refugees, fugitives one step ahead of law-enforcing persecutors, and therefore hidden behind locked doors and shuttered windows. Five priests and a few laymen were gathered around a secret altar in an inconspicuous house in Holborn street.

Dom John Roberts was offering Mass for them with all the devotion of one who has been long deprived of its consolation. The words of that Sunday's Mass throbbed in his brain. That Mass was made for him, for his fellow refugees, for the exiled Church in England that day. "To you I lift up my soul, O Lord, my God. In you I trust; let me not be put to shame, let not my enemies exult over me. No one who waits for you shall be put to shame."



St. Paul's words in the Epistle were a warning to him. "Our salvation is nearer than when we came to believe. The night is far advanced; the day is at hand."

After having offered the great Sacrifice, nourished with the Food of Martyrs, Dom John was bringing the Mass to a quick close. As he turned to say the Last Gospel, he heard the angry flood of a mob come pouring down Chancery Lane—the pack on a chase. But, before the crowd could force an entry, the altar was dismantled, sacred vessels concealed, and the six priests, Dom John still vested, hidden in the cellar. There the great Benedictine apostle was caught. On that bleak December morning, the hostile streets of London laughed to see a Benedictine monk still wearing his Mass vestments hooted and pushed along the way to Newgate Prison. The first professed monk to suffer for the Faith in England since Henry VIII now waited for his trial.

The usual courtroom farce followed. The same worn techniques were brought out: bluff, garbed evidence, denial of defence. It was a typical persecution court, the same heavy handed, calculated contempt for justice, styled to the pattern cut by Nero and Diocletian and passed on, dressed up with a few sartorial improvements, to the present day of communist controlled "people's court."

On December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the death sentence was read to Dom John Roberts, priest, monk, hence traitor

to His Majesty. "On Tyburn gallows come December 10, you will hang until nearly dead, then you will be cut down, drawn and quartered."

They tell us the morning of December 10 was dreary, that "fog hung heavily over the sinful city." Dom John walked the three miles to the gallows as though it were a triumphal procession. After a stirring address to the people, summoning up all the strength he could, he shouted, yelled out to the crowds: "Outside the true Church there is no salvation. One God, one Faith, without that Faith, it is impossible to please God." In another minute the cart was pulled out from under him, and he was hanging, dying a martyr's death.

Three centuries later, in 1929, Pope Pius XI beatified Dom John Roberts, along with eight other martyr Benedictine monks.

The Witnessing of the Centuries

Certainly, the death of Dom John was not so very unusual. A few details are unusually colorful; his courage is a bit more striking. But the strength of his martyr's spirit stems from roots as old as Christianity itself.

From the earliest days of Christianity there has been conflict between the allegiance which men owe to their religion and to their country. When the rulers of a nation make it impossible for Christians to live according to their conscience, there is no alternative but martyrdom.

As early as 156 A.D., an old man stood in the amphitheater at Smyrna

in Asia Minor. Majestic in his calm, firm in the truth of his faith, Polycarp stepped back from the altar of Caesar. He refused to drop a pinch of incense on the fire there. Just as Dom Roberts' refusal to sign the heretical oath of allegiance to the king had been called disloyalty to the state, to the pagan crowds of Smyrna Polycarp's refusal to worship Caesar branded him a traitor. Polycarp quietly said: "We are taught to give due honor to princes, so far as it is consistent with religion."

St. Thomas More, almost a century before Dom John, had said in an English court: "I die the King's good servant, but God's, first."

Down to our own day, the day of Archbishop Stepinac, of Cardinal Mindzenty, and of an army of heroic men and women, the major issues have not changed.

Go out into the darkness

The great good to be got out of the study of the stand of the martyrs is this: one can learn not to fear, or at least to fear less. For as never before, people today are fearing. Fear sweeps over us when we face the unknown and feel we do not have the strength to battle our way through it. Then the bottom is likely to fall out of our confidence in the Church and the God-Man Who founded it to prevail against the gates of hell itself. To lose confidence is to lose love too. After this step you have a Catholic in name only.

The thought of atomic warfare,

Communist conquest, the host of forebodings about the coming religious persecutions are trying to squeeze souls dry of trust in God. Panic can make a man an atheist; at least, he will be acting like an atheist. True, there are times when the flesh will be afraid of the courage of the heart. But that is only to say that Gethsemani is the inevitable prelude to every way of the Cross.

We need a little of the bravado of Tertullian. Toward the middle of what turned out to be three hundred years of persecution, this defiant soul stood back watching the crowds of Christians pouring out their blood before gawking crowds in the Roman arena. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians," he confidently remarked.

In coming years, it will be well to keep in mind these now famous lines. "I said to the man who stood at the gate: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. And he replied: "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light."



HARD WAY HOME



BY

ANNA M. RECORD

SUSAN Garrett leaned against the bulletin board in Morris Hall, and slid her mother's letter from the pages of her history textbook. She hadn't much time before her piano lesson with Laurence Blackburn—the opportunity of studying with Blackburn, the concert pianist, was really why she had accepted the scholarship offered her by the State University when she was representing her home town college, St. Cecelia's, in an inter-collegiate musical competition last spring—and she was anxious to skim the news from home. Later she would read the letter in detail, savoring the homely pictures her mother made so vivid.

"Susie dear,

This morning the boys decorated the windows with pine boughs and bittersweet, and the whole house has a spicy evergreen fragrance, even in the front hall. You know Jeanie and her pine cones! She spent the whole afternoon yesterday spraying them with green and silver. After they dried, she twisted little fine wires around the stems and hung them on the Christmas tree. And really, they are the prettiest ornaments we have this year. I wish you could see them....

Momentarily Susan was swept by nostalgia. An aching loneliness for the familiar and exciting

sweetness of home during the Christmas season possessed her. Hastily she scanned the detailed paragraphs: seeing the Garretts laughing and arguing as they trimmed the Christmas tree; with Jeanie and Mother, pushing through the crowded shops in search of Christmas bargains; feeling the bright warmth of the hearth fire in the living room, tasting the cocoa and cookies Mother had served the carolers who serenaded them one windy, snowy night....

"....We all wish you were coming home for Christmas, darling. You can't imagine how much we miss you. I think we feel it more on Sunday mornings when we are all kneeling at the Communion railing and you aren't with us. Susan, you do get to Mass and the sacraments regularly, don't you? It isn't that Daddy and I doubt your faith, dear, but you know how uncertain we were about your transferring to a secular college so far from home, even for so fine an opportunity, and you never mention church in your letters any more. I've had a confused—I hope silly—feeling lately that perhaps things aren't quite right for some reason. If anything is troubling you, Susan, you'll let Daddy and me know, won't you? And, surely, you

know you can always talk things over with the chaplain, either in confession or in his home or office if it isn't a matter for the confessional.

If we just had the money for your fare home—! Vacations are so dreary spent at school. But you know how difficult things have been since Daddy's illness. He's fine now, and we're catching up now that he is working again, but there are still doctor bills and fuel bills that have to be paid...."

Tears blurring her eyes, Susan stared unseeingly at the letter, at the signature, "Lovingly, Mother." Mother didn't understand, of course, how different life was outside the little town Susan had lived in till last fall—and she seemed to think good people everywhere accepted the uncompromising principles of their Church regarding everyday living. That you couldn't *be* happy and successful and good unless you were a practising Catholic.

"I believed it, too," Susan thought. "St. Cecilia's was so narrow and humorless it's no wonder I made a laughing stock of myself in History of Thought class—defending miracles, and being shocked when Dr. Leyton said the stigmata of the saints resulted from a form of hysteria—"

The thunder of chairs being

pushed back in nearby lecture rooms startled her. Susan had to hurry now to reach the music building in time for her private piano lesson with Laurence Blackburn. She thrust the letter back into her history book, and ran down the steps of Morris Hall. It was a relief to fold away and thrust out of sight—like the closely written pages of the letter—the problems her mother's questioning had raised in her mind.

But the eagerly-awaited hour with Blackburn—the fascination of his music and compelling personality—served only to confuse Susan further. From boundless admiration, almost reverence, for the man's art, Susan's feeling for him had moved swiftly and passionately into love. Four months ago she would never have allowed herself to think of him in terms of marriage, less because of his fame than because of his marital status: Laurence Blackburn was divorced.

Though she had heard some vague reference to Blackburn's "ex-wife," the definite knowledge had come to her as a shock the day he asked her abruptly if she would marry him. Susan was as overwhelmed by the declaration as if she were a Grecian maiden courted by Apollo! Laurence had slipped a delicate little sapphire ring on her finger; and, sometime

in the incoherent, blissful hour that followed, had told her about his first wife and about his little girl, half as old as Susan.... It had been, momentarily, a staggering blow. Susan rallied under Laurence's repeated and tender assurances that his first marriage was "over completely," except, of course, for his devotion to his little daughter, and that he loved only Susan in the way a husband loves his wife.

Susan reassured herself further, as qualms beset her, by reflecting that the Ethics course required for graduation taught the class that there are, "in any age individuals too big to fit the conventional mold fashioned by society and religion...." In other words, the moral code by which the majority lived could not rightly be applied to them. Surely, Susan thought, musicians were among the geniuses for whom exceptions had to be made—? Laurence Blackburn's music set him apart. He was different. Susan clung to this comforting hypothesis with stubborn tenacity when doubts, such as those her mother's letter had aroused, assailed her.

"What's the matter, Susie?" Laurence spoke quietly as the lesson hour ended.

"Nothing," Susan said quickly—too quickly. "Why?"

"It's in your playing. There's

something wrong. What is it?"

"Oh," Susan managed a little laugh, "I'm just blue, I guess. Thinking about Christmas and not being home. I had a letter from Mother this morning," she added slowly. "She—described everything so vividly I could see it without actually being there."

Laurence touched her cheek fleetingly with a slender fingertip. "All little girls want to be home on Christmas. My little girl Peggy is homesick, too. She's at school in Switzerland—did I tell you?—and ordinarily she loves it. But not now! 'Daddy, can I fly home to visit you on Christmas Eve?' Poor little scamp, she's had a pretty thin time of it, being shuttled back and forth between her mother and me."

Pity for the unknown, but pathetic little Peggy, who at ten was "away at school" instead of at home with her parents—*both* her parents—brought tears stinging and bitter to Susan's eyes.

"Darling, you're not still worrying about your folks and the divorce, are you? Can't you *see* how ridiculous any church is to call *all* divorce wrong? Take Marjorie and me, for example! We eloped after we'd known each other a couple of days and found out we hadn't a thing in common. We tried, both of us did, but the only civilized thing to do was sep-

arate and try again with somebody else. I understand Marjorie is very happy with her second husband."

Such tolerance still bewildered Susan. It seemed the equivalence of indifference. "Laurence, how can you *be* so broad-minded about it? Don't you mind her marrying somebody else? And after having you, how *could* she!"

"Darling, you're a prejudiced fiancée. But I love you for it! Let's celebrate the beginning of Christmas vacation by eating lunch at my place. We'll buy steaks and you'll cook them, and I'll make a green salad of some kind. We'll drink gallons of coffee, and listen to recordings all afternoon."

"Wonderful!" said Susan blissfully, slipping her hand in his. "Oh, Larry, I do love you!"

"And I love you, Susie—always and forever."

Susan was motionless. She was the *second* woman to whom Laurence had made that supreme promise... What if, some day, Laurence ceased to love *her*... explained to some third woman that his last marriage was "over and done with" and had been "impossible from the beginning..."? The thought was ugly and insidious. Determinedly, Susan banished it from her mind. In the glow of Larry's charm, it was impossible

not to believe in his sincerity.

The days slid by into weeks and then months, and still Susan could find no words to tell her parents that she intended to marry Laurence Blackburn—and that she could neither marry him at a nuptial high mass, nor in the rectory of her home town church. In spite of her textbooks' and professors' cynicism regarding religion, and her friends' efforts to make her believe that of course when her folks knew Laurence—and *knew who he was*—they'd "see it differently" and "take it sensibly," Susan knew they wouldn't. Who Laurence was in the eyes of the world wouldn't matter to Jim and Naomi Garrett. They would never see her marriage to him as anything but evil, forbidden by God's express law.

An impotent fury seized her at times, that her parents whom she dearly loved and shrank from hurting were so literal and narrow-minded that they could admit of no exceptions to a moral principle.

"It's not that *anybody* really *wants* divorce," Susan thought hotly, "but circumstances force it on people!" She was repeating what she had heard countless times from Laurence and other divorced persons there on the campus. The way circumstances force birth control on people! Mother

and Dad ought to read sociology and a little authentic history, and—and get hep to what really goes on in the world! Why, they actually believe it's a mortal sin not to go to Mass on Sunday! *Nobody* goes to church every Sunday here, except a few pious fanatics who embarrass everybody else by taking religion too seriously. Of course, religion is a good thing, but, after all, it developed over the centuries like other moral codes, with people adding this and doing that—sociology makes that plain! And yet...."

Suddenly, harshly, without really knowing why, Susan was crying. "I wish I hadn't come here! I wish I were back at St. Cecelia's and still believed in something real! What—what *point* is there in life if God is only an idea that people thought up, and right and wrong are whatever you think they are, or want them to be—"

Her mother's words, spoken last summer when they were discussing the scholarship, came back as insistently and clearly as if she were there beside Susan to advise her: "You'll have to try harder to practise your faith on a big secular campus, Susie, than at St. Cecilia's where all your classes are in accord with Catholic principles. No one will remind you to go to Mass and confession unless you are lucky enough to have a

Catholic roommate. In that case you'll help each other, of course, but you aren't likely to have one. Your music is important, Susan, but not nearly so important as your Catholic faith. No matter what you see or read or hear, remember that! Promise me you'll go to Mass every Sunday, no matter how far away the church is, or how tired you are, or how late you've been up on Saturday night—"

"Susan had forgotten the promise that had, at that time, seemed so unnecessary. Now, in her confused unhappiness, it seemed a life line. It was, at least, something definite, bind her to action whose familiarity, in anticipation, brought her family vividly to her memory. Slowly Susan nodded, the desperation leaving her. She would seek solace from the only source she knew. With a strange feeling of calm, she went to Mass the next morning, kneeling where she could see the altar clearly.

As the priest began the eternal beauty of the *Asperges me*, the bitter, bewildered months seemed to roll away. *Miserere mei, Deus . . . lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor . . .* Have mercy on me, O God . . . Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow . . . Susan was listening with her heart, hearing all over again the

timeless message of Holy Mother Church—hearing its clarity and simplicity and changelessness. It was the world which changed, not the Church. In 2000 years, the Church had *never* changed, yet in every age there had been, Luthers, Henry VIII's—yes, and Laurence Blackburns and Susan Garretts, too, claiming that their individuality, their special "difference" exempted them from God's more difficult laws.

Following the service down the pages of her missal, Susan was shaken by passages that seemed meant specifically and specially for her. "Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked . . . In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts . . ." The gifts of fame, position, even of love, could not wipe out the iniquity of adulterous marriage, could not restore her soul if she flung it away in wilfully blind defiance of God's will.

Long after the *Ite, missa est* and the Last Gospel, Susan knelt with her eyes on the altar, seeking strength for the renunciation that would bewilder Laurence Blackburn and mystify her friends. She would know desolate loneliness in the days to come—that she realized—but in her heart for the first time in months was the peace that passes understanding. The lost traveler was home.



Bleak Woodland

Meinrad Kinder, O.S.B.

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Books

The Little World of Don Camillo

A Cup of Sky

Revolution in a City Parish

Moments of Light

THE LITTLE WORLD OF DON CAMILLO. By Giovanni Guareschi. Translated from the Italian by Una Vincenzo Troubridge. Pellegrini & Cudahy, 333 Sixth Ave., New York 14, N.Y. 205 pp. \$2.75.

Before exploring *The Little World Of Don Camillo*, Giovanni Guareschi, the creator of Camillo's microcosm, tells "How I got this way." Perhaps that is the best place to begin, since it is there that he begins the book by stating, "My life began on the 1st of May, 1908, and between one thing and another, it still goes on."

Still going on, Giovanni Guareschi is one of those indestructable Italians whom war, famine, political oppression, and foreign domination have failed to crush or completely sour on life. It is this deep-rooted determination, this heavy-handed whimsy, this lyric explosiveness of the volcanic Italian temperament,

that he brings to life in the startling *Little World Of Don Camillo*.

He doesn't say, but perhaps he first felt the birth pangs of the determination, whimsy and explosiveness of his Camillo in the years he describes: "The period I spent in prison (a German concentration camp) was the most intensely active of my life. In fact I had to do everything to stay alive and succeeded almost completely by dedicating myself to a precise program which is summarized in my slogan, 'I will not die even if they kill me.'"

The *Little World* lies somewhere in the valley of the Po River in Northern Italy. It could be almost any of the tiny villages that spring up in the stretches of maize and hemp fields that quilt the plain between the river and the mountains. In this *Little World* where, the author says, even the dogs have souls, the village priest and his protagonist, a fire-eating, soft-souled

communist mayor named Peppone, battle through twenty-one rounds of humorous, yet often starkly tragic, skirmishing.

The humor ranges from the encounter of the priest and the mayor over the rim of the baptismal font when the communist wants his son to be christened "Lenin," to Don Camillo's artfully planned retaliation of having Peppone's little son (christened "Camillo," by the way) recite a poem at the reception honoring the local bishop. When Peppone tied fire crackers to the clappers of his tower bells, Don Camillo was infuriated and threatened to splinter a wooden candlestick over the ostentatiously pious head of the mayor in the front row. Later the irate pastor, aboard his racing bike, peddled furiously to save the hot-headed communist from spraying the neighboring village with his Tommy gun. When they met in the black of night at a lonely country bridge, they sat on the wall of the bridge, talking amicably. Shortly thereafter the communist found himself toppling head foremost into the stream and the priest riding off at top speed, Peppone's Tommy gun securely cradled under the priest's arm.

When Don Camillo found the son of a local red defacing the newly whitewashed wall of his church, he wrathfully grabbed the young miscreant by the arm only to find that the lad was skin and bones, a victim of undernourishment and the inability of his politically hot-blooded father to hold a job. The murder

of an innocent man and the subsequent shudder of fear that shook the village, the attempt upon Camillo's life and Peppone's efforts to protect the priest, and the gloomy disillusionment of the mayor in the "party line" when he finally stops to listen to his own speeches—all these have a sobering effect on the rollicking pace of the earlier pages of the book. The last episode presents Don Camillo and Peppone, with the begrudging good will and confidence of mutual silence, repairing the statues of the Christmas crib.

One of the most striking features of the *Little World* is the Christ who speaks from the crucifix above the main altar in the village church. With an appropriately divine sense of humor and tolerance, this Christ talks to Don Camillo, advises him, and chides him throughout the book. Some may perhaps find this familiarity with the Son of God somewhat irreverent. But, as the author points out, "the one who speaks in this story is not Christ, but my Christ—that is the voice of my conscience." Seen in this light, the familiar comradeship displayed between Don Camillo and the Christ of his village church can be only another witness to the holiness of this heavy-handed pastor of the people.

All that needs to be said now is—it's a good book. Read it.

—*Geoffrey Gaughan, O.S.B.*

A CUP OF SKY. By Donald Culross Peattie and Noel Peattie. Houghton Mifflin Co., 432 Fourth

Ave., New York 16, N.Y. 242 pp. \$2.50.

Here is a book that can be read and enjoyed by the whole family. Written in a calm and unhurried style, it combines the authenticity of true scientific observation of the wonders of nature with a magical sense of poetic interpretation. The esteemed place Donald Culross Peattie has won for himself in science scarcely requires mentioning. He himself wrote the larger part of this new book, but four very good chapters were written by his son, Noel, and father and son worked conjointly on another chapter.

The book ranges over a wide variety of topics: snow, shooting stars, ferns, bats, the moon, and others equally fascinating. Each chapter is short and is ably written in a prose the literary level of which is very superior. It is true, of course, that the book is a popular approach to science and therefore avoids the depth—and frigidity—of purely scientific writing. The authors do not attempt to exhaust the various topics; they merely present, in a highly attractive form, a view of some of the marvels of God's universe. Mr. Peattie and his son are to be congratulated on the contribution they make, through this book, toward restoring to mankind a refreshing sense of wonder over the beauty of God's creation.

Though we do not want to quibble, we feel that we must nevertheless take exception to a statement in the book which would leave the impres-

sion that the Augustinian monk, Mendel, dedicated his whole life to the great work he accomplished in his studies on genetics. On the contrary, Mendel's experiments in genetics were simply a side issue, a hobby of his. The experiments covered only ten or twelve years, during which time they were only one episode in Mendel's daily round of monastic duties.

The book begins with a short biography of one of God's beloved, that great lover of Nature, St. Francis of Assisi. At the end of the biographical sketch is given the "Hymn to Creation," which was composed by the Saint. Each of the subsequent chapters is headed by an appropriate phrase from this canticle of praise of God for the blessings He has given us in creation.

Every one of the chapters, whether by father or son, reveals a fine feeling for words, for the right way to express a deep appreciation of natural phenomena. Though the book makes no pretense at being rigidly scientific, it more than once reveals the basic complexity of subjects that the ordinary person might lean toward regarding as simple. But the chief triumph of the book is perhaps the very fact that it does not make such matters unintelligible to the average person, but that it rather stirs up in him a feeling of keen delight over the wonder that lies in nature.

The book could ideally be read aloud to the entire family. It might rouse in more than one member of

the family the desire to do a little further research in the library, to discover a little more of the beauty and wonder that is everywhere in the things God has made.

—*Fabian Frieders, O.S.B.*

REVOLUTION IN A CITY PARISH. By Abbé G. Michonneau. The Newman Press, Box 150, Westminster, Maryland. 189 pp., + xxi. Cloth edition, \$2.50; paper edition, \$1.25.

Thanks to the Newman Press, we now have an American edition of Father Michonneau's book, which has aroused considerable interest in its French and English editions. The appearance of this new edition gives us an opportunity to bring it to the attention of those who may have missed it up to now.

Books about the modern Catholic revival have been coming out of France in rapid succession during the last five years. This one by Father Michonneau, no longer the latest, is in many respects the most valuable one for the American reader.

Like the other books about the Church in France, it deals with many problems that are strictly local. The conditions in France are not the same as conditions in America. The situation in Father Michonneau's parish does not parallel the situation in our parishes. Nevertheless, the open-minded reader will be impressed by the similari-

ty of many conditions and the absolute sameness of some.

In his foreword, Archbishop Cushing of Boston says, "We might well apply the findings of Father Michonneau to our English-speaking world. Catholic parish life, it is true, is strong in many parts of England and the United States. But all too often our parishes are far from possessing the truly Catholic concept of the term as it was used in the Middle Ages. Indeed, the element of all-embracingness has long since been forgotten."

He also says, "Thoughtful men in many parts of the world can discover in Father Michonneau's work a pattern for advancing the boundaries of the living Church everywhere, by the use of established parishes as active cells for such growth."

That should be recommendation enough. But there are still other reasons for reading the book.

It is a lesson in honest self-appraisal. Every page testifies to the sincerity of the author and his fellow priests. This pastor and his assistants are deeply conscious of the divine power inherent in the Church. They realize that its power can transform the life of the people in their parish. They freely admit that their own imperfections in the course of their priestly ministrations are one of the greatest obstacles to that transformation. They are constantly evaluating their efforts in the light of this realization and

seeking ways to improve their effectiveness as ministers of God.

One of the finest things in the whole book is the short section on teamwork among the parish priests. It sounds almost too good to be true. The oneness of mind and heart, the common effort to carry that same spirit of unity to an ever larger number of men, these are things which sound like a page out of St. Paul. Certainly this is the ideal to be aimed at. The living unity of a parish should be an extension of the unity that exists among the parish priests.

Priests will find this book interesting, thought-provoking, and inspiring. Lay readers will take from it a new reverence for the priesthood and a deeper interest in their parish and in the whole Church.

—Eric Lies, O.S.B.

MOMENTS OF LIGHT. By Dom Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. Burns Oates (London); American representative: Templegate, 212 South Seventh St., Springfield, Ill. 183 pp. \$2.50.

There is a God-inspired determination in our day to put the practice of daily spiritual reading back into the lives of Catholics. That entails the writing of enjoyable, interesting spiritual books. By this time, Dom Hubert van Zeller, monk of Downside Abbey, England, is secure in his position as a leading writer in the movement. His *Moments of*

Light is a recent contribution to the literature in this field.

"Notes on the Spiritual Life" is the sub-title Dom Hubert gives the book. In it he sets out to give a non-technical account of the soul's groping toward higher union with God. The main features of the book are its short chapters, sometimes less than a page in length, and compact thought. The sequence of topics is arbitrary, rather rambling, but the book does break down into three sections. A sketchy outline of the purgative and illuminative ways of the spiritual life takes up the first third. Here the nights of the sense and of the spirit are the main concern. Some random shots at the troubles in these stages, and an expansion of the earlier topics fill out the rest of the book.

Ascetical Theology is no simple topic to handle. A two-year course in the seminary leaves you still scratching the surface. But for souls sincerely interested in spiritual advancement, knowledge of these obscure and intricate subjects is a great help. Hence we say bravo when some one volunteers to guide us in these matters.

But it would be going too far to say that Dom Hubert's is completely popular treatment, a book everyone can look to. For one thing, forcing your readers to cope with some lengthy Latin quotations, and no translation given, is unfair. Then too, the terminology of Scholastic philosophy is often recklessly thrown around, with little or no explanation given. All this is unfortunate, in

view of the fund of common sense in these lofty matters which Dom Hubert is giving us.

On the credit side are the piercing insights into the soul's activities which provide the real "moments of light" in the book. Chapters on solitude of heart, activity, suffering, prayer, are excellent in helping to resolve some of the complexity souls have always found in these topics. Also, Dom Hubert has a powerful style; short sentences hammering home his point make the book convincing reading. Another merit is its handiness. A point for tomorrow's meditation or a few minutes' spiritual reading can be quickly taken from among these notes.

—Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B.

SHORTER NOTICES

A new translation of the Book of Psalms is now available. This new translation was done, we are proud to say, by Father Eberhard Olinger, of St. Meinrad's Abbey, assisted by other Fathers of the Abbey. We think it will be found that the new translation is clear, exact, and enlightening. The translation of the Psalms was made from the original Hebrew. Included in this book is also a translation of the seventeen Canticles used in the Roman Breviary. The Canticles were likewise translated from the original Hebrew, except, of course, those Canticles whose original or oldest available form is Greek. The present book was done under the auspices of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. (*The Book of Psalms*. St. Anthony

Guild Press, Paterson, New Jersey. 302 pp. \$2.00.)

Pantheon Books, Inc. (333 Sixth Ave., New York 14, N.Y.), has issued two new books, either of which would make a very attractive Christmas gift. One is *The Christmas Story*, a beautiful book of 31 rather large pages. It contains the account of Christ's Nativity, as narrated by St. Luke and St. Matthew. Facing the text are full-color plates, fifteen in all, reproductions of paintings by the great masters. The book sells for \$2.95. If you order the book, be sure to specify that you want the Douay version, since Pantheon Books also publishes this book with a Protestant version of Scripture.

The other new book issued by Pantheon Books is *The Trapp-Family Book of Christmas Songs*. This book of 128 pages is full of the songs of many countries and from all Christian ages. Every foreign song is given with both the original text and an English translation. The musical notation is arranged for both voice and piano, in a singable and playable form. The book is charmingly illustrated by Agathe Trapp, and there is a short but engaging introduction by Baroness Trapp. Father Franz Wasner, the Trapp Family's chaplain and musical director, arranged the music, and he also contributed some interesting historical and critical observations on many of the songs. The price of the book is \$2.75. It is a book that the whole family would enjoy.

Index to *The Grail* 1950

Volume 32, Number 1-12

ADVERTISING:

Bill Boards and Slender Figures	Aug. 18
---------------------------------------	---------

ANECDOTES:

Beside a Road in China	Dec. 65
Chinese Comeback	June 65
Embarrassing Moment	Aug. 6
Freedom of Choice	July 1
Freedom and a Lady	July 65
Mass and Louis XIV	May 53
Medal to Pawn, A	Aug. 65
On a French Train	Oct. 65
Saved by a Semicolon	July 45
Truth Hurts Mussolini, The	May 48
Your Voice Gives You Away	June 17
Young Soldier	Nov. 65

APOSTOLATE, CHRISTIAN:

Canned Heat and Haceldama	Oct. 53
Christian Family Movement	July 18
Christian Revolution	Oct. 22
It's a Family Affair	Nov. 55
Grass Roots Catholicism	Apr. 1
Refresher Course in Christian Values	Nov. 51
Who Shall Bear the Flame?	Feb. 55

ART, CHRISTIAN:

Lamb, The	Apr. 5
Madonna Mother	May 64
Mors et Vita Duello	Apr. 50
Third Sculpture International	Aug. 32

BENEDICTINE INTERESTS:

Benedictine Contributions to Church Architecture	Oct. 61
Benedictines and Libraries	May 16
Modern Youth Visits a Monastery	Apr. 38
St. Benedict the Man	Sept. 57

BOOK REVIEWS:

Behind the Mass	Oct. 62
Benedictine Contributions to Church Architecture	Oct. 61
Bump on Brannigan's Head	Sept. 60
Cardinal, The	July 57
Cardinal's Story, The	Apr. 61
Catholic Radicalism	Jan. 63
Catholic Voice, The	June 61
Creed in Slow Motion, The	Feb. 60
Edge of Doom, The	Jan. 57
Father Flannigan of Boys Town	May 59
Fitting God Into The Picture	June 62
From God to God	Feb. 62
Fundamental Moral Attitudes	Nov. 59
Gentian Hill	Mar. 59

God in Our House	Feb. 61
God's Love Songs	Aug. 62
Innocents at Home	July 61
I Leap Over the Wall	Sept. 62
Letters of St. Therese	Mar. 61
Life and Miracles of St. Benedict	May 62
Like Lesser Gods	June 59
Liturgical Year, The	Jan. 62
Man on Fire	Mar. 64
Mind the Baby	Feb. 59
Mystery of Charity of Joan of Arc	June 55
Our Family Book of Life	May 63
Our Father's House	May 60
Outlaws of Ravenhurst	June 60
Rare Is the Friend	Apr. 63
Reproachfully Yours	Feb. 58
St. Benedict the Man	Aug. 63
St. Margaret of Cortona	Apr. 59
Saints Are Not Sad	Mar. 63
Seven Keys to a Christian Home	Jan. 64
Shepherds in the Mist	Apr. 58
Spiritual Direction	Nov. 61
Stories of Our Century	Mar. 60
Storm of Glory	Sept. 61
Story of the Trapp Family Singers, The	Jan. 58
Table Near the Band	Nov. 58
Tears of the Blind Lions	May 61
Theology of the Old Testament	Aug. 60
They Made Me Sign	Apr. 59
Three Wishes of Jamie McRuin, The	Feb. 63
Time to Laugh, A	Mar. 59
Two Lovely Beasts	Nov. 57
Understanding Your Boy	Oct. 60
Vessel of Clay	Oct. 59
Virgin and the Child, The	Apr. 61
Wager, The	July 59
Waters of Siloe, The	Jan. 60
We Live With Our Eyes Open	July 63
What are These Wounds	Aug. 61
What Must I Do?	Oct. 61
Where I Found Christ	Nov. 56
Work Suspended and Other Short Stories	Jan. 59
COLLEGE:	
Going to a Secular College?	Aug. 42
COMICS:	
Comics	Mar. 22
COMMUNISM VS. CAPITALISM	Sept. 41
COMMUNISM IS OUR ENEMY	Oct. 49
DRAMA:	
Divine Tragedy, The	Apr. 30
Guilty of Treason	Apr. 31
Presenting Players, Inc.	Mar. 10
Thunder in the Mountains	May 9

FAMILY AND HOME:

American Bishops Pastorals Adapted	Mar.	7
Blessing of Children	Apr.	7
Christian Family Movement, The	July	18
Christian Family's First Sacramentals	Jan.	16
Comics	Mar.	22
Grandmas Are Back in Style	Dec.	1
Hand That Rocks the Cradle, The	May	15
Housing and Environment	Feb.	54
Life's Role, A	Feb.	57
Little Church That a Home Is	June	7
Mother Said There'd be Days Like This	Sept.	28
Natural Birth	Dec.	12
One Room World	Dec.	29
Panorama From My Soapbox	June	20
Pastoral on the Family	Feb.	26
Strength on the Home Front	June	44

FICTION:

Alice-Sit-By-the-Sea	Jan.	26
Blind Saint	Apr.	51
Case of the Chewed Nylons	Mar.	54
Dutch Birthday Party, A	July	54
Fear Has Two Faces	Aug.	56
First Day in School	Sept.	46
Hard Way Home	Dec.	46
He That Shall Lose His Love	Aug.	13
Love By Candlelight	Nov.	4
Love Casts Out Fear	May	54
Millie	June	51
Mom's Open House	May	46
Murder at Vico-Varo	Nov.	16
Night Shift at Courtney's	Oct.	32
Not Half Good Enough	Sept.	8
Obedience	Oct.	5
Our Poorest Christmas	Dec.	7
Pierre, Son of Liberty	July	28
Precious Contraband	Jan.	1
Stars Fell on Coal Mines	Feb.	7
Then I'll Take Rain	Jan.	49
There Was A Mouse Once	July	25
Three For the Future	Dec.	18
Whistles Blow No More	Nov.	32
	Sept.	51

HISTORY:

Death Comes to the Persecutors	Jan.	43
	Feb.	46
	Mar.	44
Emperor's Brag, The	Apr.	21

HOLY YEAR:

Holy Year Communique	June	48
Opening the Doors to the Holy Year	Jan.	46

HOUSING (IS) A CHRISTIAN PROBLEM:

Concerning Environment	Feb.	54
------------------------------	------	----

Landlords and Babies	June	47
One Room World	Dec.	29
HUMAN INTEREST STORIES:		
Greater Love Hath Marianne	June	12
Lucy's Dilemma	Oct.	29
Save Us a Seat, Timmy	Oct.	56
HUMAN RELATIONS:		
Cows Are Funny People	May	7
Don't Tell Me About Your Trip	Aug.	4
Get in the Game	Aug.	1
How to Stay Young	Nov.	11
I Remember—Thanks	Nov.	1
Man's World, A	June	6
HUMOR:		
Cows Are Funny People	May	7
Embarrassing Moment	Aug.	6
Limerick on Landlords	June	47
Mass Shortage	Oct.	31
Nobody Wins a War	July	24
JOURNALISM, CHRISTIAN:		
Catholic Voice, The	June	61
How the Grail is Made	Feb.	31
Novel Goes to Church, The	Oct.	26
Pius X on the Press	Feb.	64
Selling Best-Sellers	Apr.	11
So You Want to Be a Christian Writer?	Aug.	51
Sun Herald, The	Oct.	1
LETTERS:		
Letters to the Editor	Nov.	30
LITERATURE, CATHOLIC:		
Books to Grow Up On	Feb.	23
What is Catholic Literature?	Feb.	15
LITURGY:		
After Pentecost	July	46
All the Way to Heaven	Nov.	42
The Ascension—Our Joy	May	42
Christmastide—the King's Court	Jan.	51
Defend Us in Battle	Sept.	38
Easter, Triumph with Christ	Apr.	47
Epiphanytide—The Royal Conquest	Jan.	53
Feast of Christ the King	Oct.	43
Feast of Glory	Aug.	40
Pentecost—Power from on High	June	40
Rediscovering Lent	Mar.	40
Septuagesima, Preparation for Penance	Feb.	51
Sunday Mass	Nov.	46
Sundays of Advent	Dec.	39
MARRIAGE:		
Blessing of a Bridal Chamber	Feb.	1
Love in Marriage	June	21
Nuptial Blessing, The	Jan.	16

MARY:

Lucia and the Revelations at Fatima	Oct. 29
Mary's Vocation	May 1
Miraculous Medal and Father Kelly, The	Sept. 56
Now and the Hour of Our Death	Oct. 58
On a French Train	Oct. 65
Rosary Remedies Three Evils	Oct. 1

MEDICINE:

Dr. Your Propaganda is Showing	Sept. 1
Reaction to C. Q. Mattingly	Oct. 9
Socialized Medicine	July 1

PEACE:

Armament for Peace	Oct. 10
Can Western Democracy Survive?	Aug. 46

PICTURE FEATURES:

Autumn Road	Nov. 45
For These Thy Gifts	Nov. 54
Guilty of Treason	Apr. 34
How the Grail is Made	Feb. 32
I Am the Resurrection	Nov. 38
Men at Work	Jan. 32
Oberaumergau Actors	May 11
St. Bede's Hall	May 35
Third Sculpture International	Aug. 32
Veteran, The	Nov. 16

POETRY:

Benedictine Oblate	Mar. 28
Communion In The Slums	Dec. 17
Cor Humanum	Mar. 53
Haec Dies	Apr. 18
Hymn to the Holy Spirit	June 50
I'm Proud of My Dirty Hands	Sept. 32
Indian Summer	Oct. 13
Teenagers' Lament	Feb. 25

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT:

A. D. A., The	Sept. 12
Arch Enemy of Democracy	Jan. 38
Can Western Democracy Survive?	Aug. 46
Fadeout of Freedom	July 50
Government as It Should Be	May 50
Know Your Enemy	Oct. 49
Partition of Ireland, The	Apr. 13
Secularism in Embryo	Feb. 42
Totilitarian State, The	Apr. 25
Traitors and Innovators	Sept. 41
What is Fascism?	Mar. 49

RELIGION:

Beatitudes in Reverse	Nov. 14
Brotherhood of Man	Feb. 37
Chastity Glorified	June 1
Christian View of Work	Sept. 1
Fadeout of Freedom	July 50
Holiness and Freedom	Nov. 1

Mass-Going	June 24
Mystery of Christmas	Dec. 1
Passion In Us	Mar. 64
Responsibility of the Baptized	Nov. 50
Rich and St. John Chrysostom, The	Nov. 44
Seriousness is Not a Virtue	Apr. 57
Stamp Collecting, a New Slant	July 41
To a Sower	June 32
Way of the Cross	Mar. 31
Where the First A-Bomb Fell	Apr. 55
Why I Prefer Catholic Hospitals	Aug. 30
Worker's Prayer, The	Sept. 65
SACRAMENTALS, FAMILY:	
Blessing of Children	Apr. 7
Blessing of Expectant Mothers	Feb. 1
Christian Family's First Sacramentals	Jan. 16
Churching of Women	Mar. 1
Eat, Drink, and Be Saints	Aug. 8
Farmer's Sacramentals, The	May 1
Little Church That Home Is	June 7
Praise the Lord Ye Blast Furnaces	Sept. 23
Sacramentals of the Traveler	July 7
Saints Around Our Deathbed	Nov. 26
SAINTS, LIVES OF:	
Murder at Vico Varo	Nov. 16
St. Catherine and the Medal (serial—Jan.-Oct.)	Jan. 21
St. Christopher	July 7
St. John Roberts	Dec. 43
St. Mary Goretti	June 1
St. Nicholas (Long Before Santa Claus)	Dec. 25
Saint Around Our Deathbed	Nov. 26
Therese, Saint of Our Century	Oct. 45
SPIRITUAL BOOK SELECTIONS:	
Apostolate of Suffering, The	Mar. 29
Balanced Personality, A	Jan. 30
Divine Physician, The	Feb. 29
Easter Life	Apr. 56
Law of Love	June 38
Live in the Present	May 39
St. Benedict the Man	Sept. 57
WISE WORDS:	
Wise Words	Feb. 17
	May 6
	Sept. 16



Beside A Road in Northern China

a Catholic missionary priest found an old lady dying from starvation and exposure. She lay abandoned in a shallow ditch while passersby paid no attention to her. The priest helped her as best he could, but it was too late to save her life.

She had strength enough to ask the young American priest: "Why did you bother about me? Nobody else ever cared."

"I am a follower of Christ," he answered. "And He taught us to go out over the world and help everybody in need."

The old woman was deeply touched by this. It was the first time in her life that she had heard of the love of God and man. Weakly she murmured: "What a beautiful religion! Where did it come from? Who started it?"

The missionary told her as briefly as he could how God so loved the world that He sent his own Son down to earth to help us; how Christ worked daily to help the poor and afflicted, and how He left one great commandment, that His followers go forth among people and help every single creature, especially those in need.

The poor old woman was surprised. "And when did your Christ live," she asked in amazement, "forty or fifty years ago?"

When the priest said nearly two thousand years ago, she stared at him her eyes full of tears and unbelief: "You mean to say that two thousand years ago Christ commanded His followers to spread this love of God and man over all the earth?"

The priest sadly admitted that it had been so long ago. The old woman's wrinkled face was wet with bewildering tears. Her next words spoken so wistfully made the young priest blush with shame: "Well, where have you Christians been for the past two thousand years?"

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